

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A CRITICAL STUDY OF PAUL ERNST'S ERDACHTE GESPRÄCHE

by

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AN ABSTRACT

The dialogue can lay claim to a long and illustrious history. As with so many literary forms and genres it started with the Greeks. It came to life again in the late Middle Ages when it served the purposes of a debate dealing with perennially significant subjects such as death. The second chapter in this thesis is an attempt to trace in a succinct way the development of the dialogue from its earliest appearance to the present. To this end a number of writers who have made a significant contribution to the genre have been singled out.

As far as this thesis is concerned, it limits itself to an interpretation and an assessment of the contribution made to the genre of the dialogue by Paul Ernst.

At the outset it seemed imperative to arrive at a definition of the term 'dialogue', i.e., in theory and in practice. However, it soon became evident that such an attempt at a clear-cut definition of the term would prove problematical, if not altogether impossible.

It may be stated that the writer of dialogues, like the writer of imaginary letters - we need only think of Hugo von Hoffmannsthal and his Letter of Lord Chandos or of Ernst Wilhelm Eschmann and his volume of Erdachte Briefe - as well as the essay

writer, is attracted to this form because of the absence of rigidity. Just as a conversation is not bound by any rules by which it must be conducted, in the same way the dialogue is free to range and develop in any direction it wants to go. There are some rules and regulations governing the dialogue but it is not my intention to analyze the formal qualities of the dialogue in this thesis. On the other hand, the writer of dialogues has great freedom in the handling of his chosen theme.

Paul Ernst is the author of some fifty-five dialogues of varying lengths. Obviously not all of them could be interpreted and discussed in our context. For this reason a selection of characteristic Gespräche was made which might throw light on Ernst's handling of the dialogue. By means of a close reading of these selected dialogues a sufficiently distinct pattern emerges to justify our drawing conclusions.

The dialogue today may lay claim to topical significance in view of the complex situation in the media of communication such as radio and television. In studying the various forms of Ernst's dialogues, striking affinities with radio plays, i.e., the Hörspiel, emerge.

Paul Ernst's dialogues are erdacht, which is to say that they are imagined or imaginary conversations. They are the product of the intellect, of the imagination, and therefore consciously formed as opposed to Eckermann's Gespräche mit Goethe which are natural conversations, i.e., conversations which have actually taken place.

There is also consciousness and deliberateness at work in Ernst's choice of people and themes. They may appear baffling at first but achieve clarity through the dialogue form. The majority of the participants come alive as persons. However, it has to be said that now and then they do not carry conviction. We are singling out such dialogues as Der König, Auffassungen, and Don Juans Dämonie. In these instances the dialogue is being employed as vehicles for Ernst's own ideas.

Since the dialogues are erdacht it is not surprising that the language is sometimes stylized rather than being unconsciously natural. Stylistic mannerism is a characteristic feature of Paul Ernst's writings, particularly in some of his dramas and his Novellen. In a number of dialogues, such as Glauben und Glauben, Der Paria, and Don Juans Dämonie, this becomes especially noticeable as the participants exchange roles in matters of language.

The inner and outer forms of Ernst's dialogues are in harmony. The dialogues come across as a whole. No extraneous material is brought in. Ernst sticks to the subject at hand. All the parts form a cohesive whole. The dialogues are alive, dynamic and have a distinctly sustained quality. They go in a definite direction and the point is made clear in each one of them. Since outer form achieves authenticity the inner form emerges along with it. This can be seen in most, if not all of his dialogues, but telling examples are: Der Dichter und das Erlebnis, Der Tod, Die Macht, Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder, and Religion und Moral.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts principally to offer a reading of Paul Ernst's Erdachte Gespräche. Even though this work made its impact at the time it was published it has never been subjected to critical discussion of its relatedness to previous masters of the dialogue and even Paul Ernst's own attitude to the form.

Now that the problem of dialogue is not only in the air but on the air, this thesis claims to be mindful of the imperative need that exists in the value for human exchange and interchange. At no time has Gespräch, i.e., dialogue, been more eagerly discussed than today and the reason for this is none other than the lack of it, even its absence.

This dichotomy is felt at the deepest level and whilst there are little or no indications of a change in this direction the discussion concerning the importance of dialogue has never been more to the fore than today. This underlines the relevance and topicality of Paul Ernst's Erdachte Gespräche if such were wanted or needed.

Since the beginning of time human beings and especially writers have been pre-occupied with that elusive but important thing called dialogue. From the time of the ancient Greeks down to our

own days, dialogue has been a major pre-occupation because we want to, nay we must, communicate with each other. In spite of our technological accomplishments such as radio, television and other media there is less genuine dialogue now than ever has been.

Over the last fifty years the work of a sage like Martin Buber centered on the dialogue, between man and man, between I and Thou. Authors in all walks of life are trying to come to grips with this problem. The greater the need that is felt, the more are writers ready to accept this literary form to bridge the gaps. We need only mention from amongst many others the work of Rudolf Kassner, André Gide and Ilse Aichinger in this regard.

These writers have had it in their mind that dialogue is of crucial importance in human exchange on a personal as well as interpersonal level. The most immediate need for dialogue is in the family. Everyone feels the need for it there. Because of the generation gap there is also a communication gap between parents and children. To make matters worse there often exists a deep gulf of silence between husband and wife.

However, dialogue should not be confined to the family. It should reach out to society and beyond. We all know from our own experience that there is a most blatant absence of dialogue in politics. There is an impasse. We learn nothing from history. When there is no dialogue between partners there is a dead end, there is disaster. Because of this absence of Zwiesgespräch in the realm of

international politics, the problem of dialogue exercises our minds to such an extent that it has become a problem on a world-wide scale.

In the sphere of religion, too, there is an acute need for dialogue. Confession and pastoral counselling partly meet the needs of the individual here. Apart from this personal communication on a one to one basis, a continuing dialogue has been going on between the Churches. We need only think of the talks still in progress between the Anglican and United Churches in Canada. There have also been talks between Roman Catholics and Protestants to bring these two bodies closer together. The present unrest in Northern Ireland, more than anything else, points up the need for dialogue, not only on the political level, but also on the religious and human one.

As a writer, Paul Ernst was, during his lifetime, to a large extent totgeschwiegen and has been zu Unrecht vergessen since his untimely death in 1933.

The scarcity, we might even say the absence, of critical material, or of any material for that matter, on Paul Ernst is noteworthy. Copies of his works, too, are difficult to obtain. The Erdachte Gespräche have been out of print for several decades. A complete set of his dialogues in one volume was not available to me for this thesis. Consequently the Gespräche referred to came from three separate sources. The date of publication of the most recent work on Ernst available for this thesis is 1959. The Paul Ernst Gesellschaft ceased publication of its Jahrbuch at the

outbreak of World War II. All existing back copies not in private or public libraries were destroyed in the warehouse of the publishers in bombing raids during the war. Enquiries made with the Nordwestdeutsche Rundfunk in Hamburg to determine whether any of Ernst's Gespräche have been broadcast as Hörspiele have remained unanswered.

CHAPTER I

PAUL ERNST - NOTES ON HIS LIFE AND WORK

Karl Friedrich Paul Ernst was born on March 7, 1866 at Elbingerode in the Harz Mountains. His father was a miner and his mother, the daughter of a village school teacher. The Ernsts had once been well-to-do but because of the decline of the mining industry in the Harz region the family's life-style had been drastically altered. His parents professed the Lutheran faith.

His life can be divided into three periods. The first includes his childhood and youth, the years in search of himself as a theological student, and the period of some eleven years in which he was a Socialist and Journalist.

Ernst spent his childhood days in the Harz region attending the Gymnasium in Clausthal. He was a passionate reader, his favourite authors at this early age being Schiller, Hölderlin, Lessing and Lichtenberg. He was also an avid collector of books, his personal library numbering some 8,000 volumes at the time of his death.

In 1885 he began theological studies at Göttingen. From there he went to Tübingen and finally to Berlin where he spent the years 1886 and 1887. Before too long he realized that he did not have a 'calling', that he could not become a 'Pfarrer'. He was more

interested in philosophy, literature and other things than in the studies in which his parents were supporting him financially. Plagued by feelings of guilt and serious doubts about himself he finally gave up his study of theology while in Berlin.

Conditions among the working class in Berlin had appalled him. Some of his shocking experiences there found their way into his first novel, Der Schmale Weg zum Glück. The only group which he frequented in Berlin was the literary club, Durch. There he met such 'revolutionary' writers as Gerhard Hauptmann, Arno Holz, Hermann Conradi and Johannes Schlaf. All of these young writers declared themselves to be Socialists and it was through them that he became acquainted with the teachings of Karl Marx. Ernst became convinced that Socialism had the answer to society's ills. Consequently he associated with the Social Democratic Party, working for it as a journalist and speaker for some time.

In 1889 he wrote his first Novelle, Feigheit? which was published in the Berliner Volkstribüne. He subsequently spent one and a half years in a tuberculosis sanatorium in Görbersdorf, Silesia, his illness having been brought about by overwork, undernourishment and poor living quarters. At Görbersdorf he met Wera Kossenko, the daughter of a Russian general. They were married in 1890. She died the following year after giving birth to a son who outlived his mother by only a short while.

In 1890 Ernst had become editor of the Berliner Volkstribüne. He wrote many political as well as literary-sociological essays

some of which were later incorporated in his Tagebuch eines Dichters. It was at this stage in his career that he first started to correspond with Friedrich Engels. The same year he began his first critical Auseinandersetzung with Nietzsche's works from the Marxist point of view. However, he later rejected Marxism when he realized how absurd its radical consequences were.

The year 1891 was marked by struggles within the Social Democratic Party. The 'Jungen', with whom Ernst had an affinity, lost out. He consequently resigned his editorship at the Berliner Volkstribüne.

In 1892 he was awarded his Dr. Phil. at the University of Bern. His dissertation had dealt with Volkswirtschaft - economics. He subsequently became manager of an estate near Brünn. In the same year he began work on the book, Der Kapitalismus, fin de siècle, together with Dr. Rudolf Meyer.

The years 1893 to 1895 saw him engaged in scientific studies in politics, history, the history of religion and sociology. He did practical work as well in agriculture and civic administration at Nordhausen. Also during this time he wrote a one-act play, Lumpenbagasch.

From October 1895 until the spring of 1897 he was a friend and neighbour of Arno Holz in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. They undertook several projects together but did not complete them because of personality clashes. It was also during these years that he undertook his first trip to Paris, became acquainted with Chinese lyric poetry

and cultivated the friendship of Richard Dehmel, Georg Simmel and Louise Dumont.

In 1898 he completed Polymeter, a small volume of lyric poetry and parted ways with Arno Holz. This parting of the ways coincided with his break with Naturalism under whose influence he had come as a result of his association with the literary club, Durch.

That same year his Lumpenbagasch had its première in Berlin and he wrote a self-analytical novel, Wie die Flügel brechen, which, unfortunately, was never published.

The following year, 1899, he remarried. His second wife was Louise von Benda, the daughter of a prominent member of the National Liberal Party and a personal friend of the Kaiser.

The second period of Ernst's life spans the years 1900 to 1916. It is characterized by his mastery of the 'geschlossene Form', first in the realm of the Novelle and "gottlose Tragödie"⁽¹⁾ and finally in the realm of the religious drama.

Ernst undertook his first Italian journey at the turn of the century. A study of the frescoes of Giotto and of the construction of the old Italian novellas revealed to him the mystery of 'form'. Two essays, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sechs Geschichten date from the same year. Inspired by what he had seen in Italy two years earlier he translated two volumes of Altitalienische Novellen in 1902. The following year a volume of his own Novellen, Die Prinzessin des Ostens, was published.

Weimar became his new home in 1903 and except for lengthy journeys to Italy and France and two years 1905/1906 as a playwright in Düsseldorf it remained his refuge until he moved once more to Berlin in 1915. The early years in Weimar resulted in a close friendship with W. von Scholz and S. Lublinski which eventually led to their being labelled Neuklassiker - Neo-Classicists.

In his Literatur-Lexikon, Kosch makes the following statement about Ernst:

...begann literarisch als Naturalist,
ging dann unter Hofmannsthals Einfluss
zur Neuromantik über und verhalf⁽²⁾ später
dem Neuklassizismus zur Blüte.

It is difficult to comprehend how Ernst could have been first a Naturalist, then a Neo-Romantic and finally ended up as a Neo-Classicist.

By using these terms to describe Ernst, Kosch is doing violence to him for Ernst evolved naturally into what he was. He did not move from one extreme to another and then to a third. This statement by Kosch is an oversimplification.

It was Paul Valéry who stressed again and again that one begins as a Romantic but eventually becomes a Classicist. A poet often goes through a Romantic phase. One need only recall Schiller and Goethe to see this. But as the poet matures he develops into something else. The Romantics, like Schlegel and Tieck, with exceptions like Wackenroder or Novalis who both died young, could not have remained Romantics all their lives. There is always a tragedy in-

volved when a Romantic gets stuck in this phase of his development. It means his development comes prematurely to a halt.

It is absurd to make these summary value judgments about Ernst. One cannot reduce the man to these common denominators. One must not categorize Ernst's works in this way. Inasmuch as Kosch is an authority in the realm of bibliography it is sad to reflect that he applies mere clichés to Paul Ernst's art.

It is significant, however, that encyclopaedias, histories of literature and biographies all associate Ernst's name with Neo-Classicism. Indeed some of them go as far as calling him one of the founders of this movement. Hans Franck, one of his contemporaries, calls Ernst:

der eigentliche Begründer und
Repräsentant der Neuklassik.⁽³⁾

Neo-Classicism was a reaction to Neo-Romanticism. Like its predecessor it is not something original but a reaction against both Naturalism and Neo-Romanticism. A poet cannot say that he is going to be a Neo-Classicalist. All he can do is overcome certain tendencies, i.e., Romanticism, and thus move from one side to another. A poet who is just beginning cannot be a Classicalist by an act of decision - it is the result of gradual development.

If a poet is steeped in the classical tradition he looks for its values. What are the qualities and values which were rediscovered and re-introduced by Neo-Classicism?

Es ist das unbestreitbare, unvergängliche Verdienst der Neuklassik, die Dinge aus dem Ungefährten wieder ins Präzise, aus dem Oberflächlichen in die Tiefe, aus dem Peripherischen ins Zentrale gerückt zu haben. (4)

Neo-Classicism put things back into their proper perspective, i.e., back into focus again. This is applicable to Ernst's own literary efforts.

When speaking of Paul Ernst's work one cannot divide it into the work of the young Ernst and that of the later Ernst as is usually done with the work of Goethe. Unlike Goethe, Ernst did not produce anything of lasting quality until he was almost forty years old. In the foreword to his Tagebuch eines Dichters he confides that writing for him was a difficult task:

Die Art meiner Begabung brachte es mit sich, dass ich erst spät, mit fast 40 Jahren, das erste Werk fertigstellte, das mir selber bis zu (5) einem gewissen Grad genügte.

When he did write something it took a long time until it was satisfactory and acceptable to him. Because of the exacting demands which he put on himself he burned fifteen dramas before he was finally satisfied with Demetrios, the work referred to in the quotation above.

His biographer, Adolf Potthoff, sums up his long and difficult struggle in these words:

Endlich war der Dichter am Ziel. Mit fast vierzig Jahren hatte er sich das erworben, was er zum (6) dramatischen Schaffen brauchte.

The year 1904 saw the publication of his Bildungsroman,
Der Schmale Weg zum Glück, which is the

dichterische Darstellung seines
 Lebensweges und seiner
 Entwicklungskrise.⁽⁷⁾

This autobiographical novel brought him the praise and recognition
 which he had craved for so long.

The drama Demetrios and the comedy Eine Nacht in Florenz
 were published in 1905. The latter had its première in Düsseldorf
 the following year.

The year 1905 marks the Wendepunkt in Ernst's literary
 career. From that year on he rose

verhältnismässig schnell zur
 höchsten Höhe⁽⁸⁾ dramatischer Kunst
 empor,

and he produced a flood of works which did not stop until his
 untimely death.

That same year he had taken over the position of first
 dramatist and editor of the theatre publication Die Masken at the
 newly opened Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus. His plans for the staging
 of Alfieri, the works of several French classic writers, his Jedermann,
 modeled after that of Hans Sachs, and several of his own dramas, were
 unfortunately never realized.

Der Hulla, a comedy and a collection of essays, Der Weg
zur Form, were published in 1906. The latter took the place of the
 periodical Die Form, which Ernst and Hans von Müller had been plan-
 ning to publish. Der Weg zur Form was followed by two other

collections of essays: Ein Credo, in 1912 and Der Zusammenbruch des Deutschen Idealismus, in 1917. They are the result of his study and analysis of the outstanding dramatic works of world literature and reveal an astonishing insight into the form of the drama. When these theoretical writings were later published in book form they established Ernst as an outstanding aesthetic writer and an authority on literary history.

The dramas Demetrios, 1903, Gold, 1904, Canossa, 1905, and Brunhild, 1908 have been called his "reine Tragödien",⁽⁹⁾ his true tragedies, whereas Ariadne auf Naxos, 1912, Manfred und Beatrice, 1913, and Kassandra, 1915, have been termed Gnadendramen, tragedies of grace, because of the "gottlose Verzweiflung"⁽¹⁰⁾ on the part of the hero in the former and the acceptance of the will of God by the hero in the latter series of dramas. The drama Childerich, 1911, falls somewhere in between. It deserves special mention because it did not receive its première until 1959.

The year 1907 marks the beginning of Ernst's friendship with Karl Scheffler and in 1910 he established friendly relations with Georg von Lukàcz who was then living in Budapest.

Der Heilige Crispin, a comedy, and Der Tod des Cosimo, a volume of Novellen carry the dates 1910 and 1911 respectively. Also in 1911 the Insel-Verlag published the Bibliothek der Romane, a collection of his novels.

As we have seen, Ernst's university years were unhappy ones. Theology could not provide the answers to the questions which were

troubling him. He was unprepared for life in a metropolis like Berlin. His association with the Social Democrats did not provide the personal satisfaction that he craved and he soon became disillusioned with politics.

His confinement to a T.B. sanatorium gave him much time for reflection. His illness, however, did have one positive aspect in that it led to his first marriage. The death of his first wife and shortly afterwards that of his infant son was a severe blow to Ernst. He withdrew once more from society and his life became lonelier than ever. His second marriage helped him back on his feet financially but there was a lack of communication between the two partners. This marriage, too, was doomed to failure.

It was these experiences, these Schicksalsschläge that caused Ernst to start work on the Erdachte Gespräche. He felt an inner need to express himself; he was in need of the Du. Easily misunderstood by those around him he looked for a means for personal expression and this he found in his Gespräche, the first of which were written in 1912.

Important personal experiences were incorporated into the dialogues which allow the reader to enter Ernst's world:

Wichtige innere Erlebnisse sind eingegangen in das Buch Erdachte Gespräche, durch die mancher den Weg in die Welt dieses Dichters finden kann. (11)

Ernst was in France when World War I broke out. He was able to get on the last train to cross the frontier before war was

declared, thereby escaping certain imprisonment for the duration of the war. Upon his return home he wrote the play Preussengeist in which his countrymen were exhorted to do their duty in their hour of need. Curiously enough it could not be performed in Prussia because a member of the Hohenzollern family figured in the play.

After divorcing his second wife in 1916, Ernst married for the third time later that year. His third wife, Else von Schorn, was a widow, the daughter of the Plato translator, Otto Apelt. She was a writer, translator and artist in her own right.

It is significant that it was his third wife who encouraged Ernst to continue work on the Erdachte Gespräche, for it was she who had earlier translated Walter Savage Landor's Imaginary Conversations into German. They were published by the same publisher who later published Ernst's works, the Georg Müller Verlag, in Munich. While an immediate link can thus be established between Landor and Ernst, it must be kept in mind that Ernst started writing his Gespräche in 1912, four years before his marriage to Else von Schorn.

The year 1916 was eventful from the literary standpoint, too, as it saw the publication of three more of his works: the comedy, Pantolon und seine Söhne, the novel, Saat auf Hoffnung, and the collection of Novellen, Die Taufe. It also marks the beginning of the publication of his collected works by the Georg Müller Verlag in twelve volumes. This collection was not completed until 1922.

Having written some 30 plays by this time, about a dozen of which had been published, Ernst felt that he had now done justice

to the drama:

Jedenfalls habe ich das Gefühl,
dass meine dramatische Arbeit
abgeschlossen ist. (12)

He now turned his attention to a new Gattung, the epic.

The last period of his life, from 1917 until his death, was devoted to epic poetry, principally the writing of the Kaiserbuch. The epic poem Luther, which remained a fragment, was the first work of this period. It carries the date 1918.

At the end of World War I, Ernst had moved into his father's house at Neustadt in the southern Harz. He had inherited it at the latter's death. He lived there until 1925 when he moved to Sonnenhofen, an estate near Königsdorf in Upper Bavaria.

Der Zusammenbruch des Marxismus, a statement of the belief which he had held for decades that Socialism of the kind advocated by Karl Marx was not the solution to Germany's problems, was published in 1919. That same year he began work on the Kaiserbuch, the first volume of which was published in 1923. Das Kaiserbuch is a great epic poem and generally regarded as Ernst's greatest work. It depicts the struggle between emperors and popes for control of Christendom, starting with the reign of Heinrich I and ending in the reign of Friedrich II.

This work took ten years to complete and consists of six volumes containing over 100,000 lines. It was intended to be ein Volksbuch - a book for the people, for Ernst hoped that

Das deutsche Volk durch diese
Dichtung vielleicht zum Bewusstsein
seiner selbst kommen würde. (13)

He wanted to show his countrymen what they could accomplish as a nation if they had great men like the "Sachsen-, Franken- und Schwabenkaiser" (14) of old to lead them.

The Komödianten-und Spitzbubengeschichten, written between 1912 and 1916, were finally published in 1920, the year in which he completed the Erdachte Gespräche. The latter were published the following year. In the same year he journeyed to Scandinavia, visiting Denmark and Sweden.

The Okkultische Novellen and the dissertation Zusammenbruch und Glaube, date from the year 1922. They were followed by the novel Grün aus Trümmern, in 1923. This novel takes the reader

mitten hinein in die Geschehnisse
der letzten Vergangenheit und
die Wirklichkeit der Gegenwart. (15)

It begins with the outbreak of World War I, describes its effect on the troops at the front and the population at home, concentrates on the shameful outcome of the war, focusing briefly on the inner crisis of the nation, and ends with the reconstruction period which provided the title for the work. It questions such things as blind obedience, doing one's duty, unquestioning faith in the country's leadership and the idea that things happen the way they do because it is the will of God.

In 1925 Ernst was forced to sell his estate because of pecuniary difficulties and moved to the old castle of St. Georgen on

the Stiefing, south-east of Graz in Austria. There he wrote another 'Wiederaufbauroman', Der Schatz im Morgenbrotsaal. Set in the Harz Mountains, it has a theme similar to Grün aus Trümmern. It was published in 1926.

The publication of the second edition of his collected works, which were to number 19 volumes, was begun by Georg Müller in 1927. The following year the Geschichten von deutscher Art appeared.

The years 1929-1930 saw the publication of three works: a volume of essays, Die Grundlagen der neuen Gesellschaft, the epic poem Der Heiland, which is a personal confession of faith in Christ as the son of God, and the first volume of his memoirs which he called Jugenderinnerungen. The latter was followed by a second volume, Jünglingsjahre, in 1931.

A collection of poems, Beten und Arbeiten, and the novel Das Glück von Lautenthal, comprise the output for 1932. A slight stroke in the spring of that year had forced him to lighten his workload. Nevertheless he undertook a demanding trip through Germany the following winter.

Ernst was very much isolated at St. Georgen and often found himself in dire financial straits. His former friends Karl Scheffler and Georg Lukàcz gradually became his enemies. He tried to influence politics as a conservative poet but his efforts were in vain.

Finally, two years before his death, his country recognized Ernst in a fitting way. On the occasion of his sixty-seventh birth-

day he was presented with the Goethe medal by President Hindenburg. That same year he was also awarded the Maximilian medal by the state of Bavaria. In 1932 he was honoured with the Wartburgrose and shortly before his death he was appointed to the newly re-instituted Dichterakademie.

The last year of his life found him working on a novel which remained unfinished. In April he produced his last piece of work, a religious sonnet, which begins:

Die Welt ist so, dass ich nicht
leben kann. (16)

He died on May 13, 1933.

CHAPTER II
THE DIALOGUE - A SURVEY IN BRIEF

Within the framework of our theme it would be impossible to mention, and still less consider, all the practitioners of the dialogue. Consequently only certain writers are being singled out to throw light on an unbroken tradition which dates back to the Greeks. Lander makes the bold claim that

the best writers in every age
have written in dialogue.⁽¹⁾

Some, however, have found this form to be beyond them. One of these men was Spinoza who in 1622 had completed the first draft of his philosophy in one work but was not satisfied with its style or with its method of exposition. He had tried "the dialogue form without success"⁽²⁾ and subsequently used the geometrical method in the manner of Euclid's Elements which gave him more satisfaction.

The Greek philosopher Socrates was the first to practise the dialogue form - for purposes of instruction. The socratic dialogue is a conversation in the form of question and answer in which the person who is questioned originates those ideas which the questioner wishes to bring before him. Through his disciple Plato and Plato's pupil Aristotle, he determined the entire subsequent course of speculative thought.

The dialogue form of Plato arose naturally out of Greek drama, the Athenian habit of discussion, and the use of dialogue by Socrates. Plato works out his philosophical argument in such a way that the attack and the defense excite a lively interest in the reader who is

artfully made to accept the truth
of the doctrine by witnessing, as
it were, the utter overthrow of
its assailants. (3)

Plato's writings exercised an inestimable influence upon Aristotle, the Stoics, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Plutarch, and especially the Neoplatonists. His works were highly influential also upon the Greek and Latin Fathers of the Christian Church, upon the scholastics of the Middle Ages, upon the philosophy and poetry of the Renaissance in Italy and England and upon the nineteenth century revival of historical and philosophical studies in Germany.

The dialogues of Aristotle differ widely from those of Plato. The form is still nominally that of a conversation but after the argument is once underway it becomes an almost unbroken monologue. Aristotle classes the dialogue form with forms of poetry.

Lucian, the second century Greek writer, is best known for his dialogues. They have various degrees of merit and are treated in a wide variety of styles, from seriousness down to broad humour and buffoonery. Their subjects and tendency, too, vary considerably: some are employed in attacking the heathen philosophy and religion, others are mere pictures of manners without any polemic drift.

Among the best known of his dialogues are the Dialogues of the Gods, which are short dramatic narratives of some of the most peculiar incidents in the heathen mythology; Timon, which may perhaps be regarded as Lucian's masterpiece, and the Dialogues of the Dead, a subject which affords great scope for moral reflection and for satire on the vanity of human pursuits.

The reader of Lucian's dialogues is generally left to draw his own conclusions from the story; the author only takes care to put it in the most absurd point of view.

Lucian's aim is to pull down, to spread a universal scepticism. His assaults were not confined to religion and philosophy but extended to everything old and venerated.

His merits as a writer rest in:

his knowledge of human nature,
his strong common-sense, the
fertility of his invention, the
raciness of his humour, and the
simplicity and Attic grace of his
diction.⁽⁴⁾

Among modern writers his dialogues have been influential with Fontenelle and Walter Savage Landor.

Saint Augustine, the fifth century Christian philosopher and bishop of the early African Church, was an outstanding Latin writer. His first dialogues, written at the time of his conversion, deal with epistemology and ethics. In a later one, De libero Arbitrio, he attacked Manichaeism, a religious doctrine adopted by many heretical Christian sects. He was the dominant personality of the Western Church in his day and is generally recognized as the out-

standing thinker of Christian antiquity.

Johann von Tepl, a fourteenth century German writer, is the author of the well known dialogue, Der Ackermann aus Böhmen; its subtitle is 'an argument and a consolation from the year 1400'. The immediate cause for Death and the Ploughman was the death of Tepl's first wife, Margaretha. It deals with the conflict between life and death in the moving form of a protesting and consolatory discourse.

The influence of Plato and Saint Augustine is recognizable in this dialogue in

its strength of touch, the concentrated brevity of attack and defence, the prevalence of classical reminiscences, the sober astuteness, the absence of any secondary portions of a really mystical nature, reflecting the outlook of the contemporary Church.⁽⁵⁾

The work was to be an experiment with the German language, a stylistic exercise. Consequently Tepl directed all his efforts towards form in prose. The outcome of this conscious effort was

by no means a mere exercise but a beautifully constructed prose poem, a genuine work of art.⁽⁶⁾

One name stands out in the Reformation period. It is Ulrich von Hutten, the German knight, humanist and reformer. He was an ardent supporter of Martin Luther whose doctrines he defended in a series of works. His dialogues, written in Latin, are modelled on those of Lucian. He employed "stinging satire and invective"⁽⁷⁾ to attack tyrannical rulers and the papacy, while at the same time "glorifying the emperor and the German national spirit".⁽⁸⁾ His

dialogues are in pamphlet form and can be described as battle cries. After 1520 he wrote in German thus introducing the dialogue form into the popular literature of his day.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century French writer Fontenelle was one of the first French writers to make a contribution to the dialogue and is still remembered for his Nouveaux Dialogues des Morts, 1683, modelled on Lucian's work by the same name.

The work is divided into three sections: Dialogues des morts anciens avec des modernes, in two parts; Dialogues des morts modernes; and Dialogues des morts anciens. The first section includes dialogues between Socrates and Montaigne on the progress of philosophy and Eristratus and Harvey on the progress of medicine.

Charles V and Erasmus discuss matters spiritual and temporal while Cortez and Montezuma speak out against colonial expeditions in section two. In section three a discussion between Homer and Aesop on the power of fables and one between Anacreon and Aristotle on philosophy and libertinage, i.e., free thinking, stand out.

This contribution to the dialogue form has assured Fontenelle a distinguished place among the practitioners of the genre.

In more modern times two names stand out: Leopardi and Landor. Some consideration of the contribution made by these two is relevant.

Leopardi's dialogues form part of the Operette morali which appeared in 1827. Landor's dialogues, Imaginary Conversations of

Literary Men and Statesmen, in five volumes, appeared almost simultaneously in 1824, 1828, and 1829. In 1853 another work, Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans, appeared.

Landor was the first to call his dialogues, imaginary conversations. When they were published it was felt and said among those who have a right to speak for futurity that "a new classic"⁽⁹⁾ had arisen.

Although Leopardi's and Landor's dialogues appeared almost simultaneously there is nothing that suggests that one was influenced by the other. Nevertheless an obvious affinity exists. Leopardi's dialogues resemble those of Landor in that his deal also with literary men, Greek and Roman scholars and heroes. Obviously both writers used the same or similar models.

Leopardi modelled his dialogues on those of Lucian. He wanted to hold up to ridicule the evils and prejudices of society, of his country and of his century. He wanted to be useful, to enlighten, to awaken his age and to bring it back to its senses.

His dialogues were not born of a spiritual need. They bear all the signs of conscious literary effort. He wrote them because he wanted to enrich Italian literature with a new genre of comedy and prose. These dialogues he believed:

würden in gewisser Weise alles das ergänzen, was der italienischen Komik noch fehlte...nämlich das Detail, d.h., der Stil und die Teilschönheiten der feineren Satire, des attischen, Plautinischen und Lukianischen Salzes and eine Sprache, die volkstümlich, rein und schicklich zugleich wäre.⁽¹⁰⁾

His conscious workmanship is evident on every page. One sees him groping for the right expression and constantly striving to create a uniform style. It is not difficult to recognize the models that are being copied nor the origin of the ideas, themes and situations used. All are the fruit of his reading, be it from Hesiod, Aristophanes, Plato, Lucian, Lucretius and Ovid or Tasso, Milton, Fontenelle, Swift, Monti, Parini, and others. Covering these scholarly frameworks are the opinions, moods and emotions of Leopardi - but so thinly that one can constantly see the framework underneath.

Karl Vossler makes the bold claim that:

Um ein Künstler des Dialoges zu werden, braucht man entweder die Gabe des dialektischen Denkens, wie sie Plato besitzt, oder des dramatischen Gefühles, wie sie den grossen Tragikern und Komikern eignet, oder eine geistvolle Mischung aus beiden, wie sie dem Lukian, dem Voltaire und Diderot gelingt. (11)

Unfortunately, Leopardi possessed neither the gift of dialectical thinking nor of dramatic feeling. His manner of thinking is essentially discursive and intellectual but not dialectical. He is unable to set one concept against another so that it may be delineated and strengthened by the second or else upset and destroyed, or perhaps have its direction changed. This inability is the result of his moods.

His dialogues have a lyrical ring to them. However, they suffer from a lack of fluency and from an internal one-sidedness. One can guess at Leopardi's purpose. It is obvious that the second

speaker is there only to elicit his opponent's statements and questions.

Landor's dialogues fall into two classes: the dramatic and the non-dramatic. Those that are full of action, character and passion belong to the dramatic group. In others there is little action, and character and passion are replaced by disquisition and reflection. These by contrast can be called non-dramatic.

In the former class, Landor is in each case taken up with the creative task of realizing a heroic or pathetic situation and keeps himself entirely in the background. In the latter class his energetic personality is apt to impose himself upon his speakers, who are often little more than masks behind which he tries to utter his own thoughts and opinions with greater convenience and variety.

The dramatic dialogues are mostly brief and range over almost all periods of time. In them he takes a motif suggested by history, being careful to avoid any actually recorded incident. He does not call up any actual scene but one that might have happened. In them he sometimes brings before the reader some group

wrought of molten metal language
at its highest tension, on some
height of passionate emotion, which
has the concentrated energy of
bronze cast in fire.⁽¹²⁾

It is therefore from the imagination and not from the literal point of view that his dialogues have to be approached.

Explanations and stage directions of all sorts, the reader has to supply for himself. Landor furnishes nothing of that nature

except what is to be inferred from the bare utterances of his speakers.

In the dramatic dialogues we find an indication of his general philosophical, religious and political views. His general philosophical attitude was

to make remote things tangible,
common things extensively useful,
useful things extensively common,
and to leave the least necessary
for the last. (13)

In religion he insisted chiefly on love of humanity and the widest toleration. In politics he was a republican of the school of Plutarch with a lively hatred of kings. His republicanism was aristocratic, a government by the fittest, and he never reconciled this with modern democracy, which he thought must lead to despotism.

The weakness of Landor's non-dramatic dialogues lies in his ineptitude for close or sustained reasoning and for stirring, rapid narrative. His characters seldom attempt argument; whenever they attempt story-telling, they fail. The true strength of the discursive dialogue lies in:

the extraordinary richness, the
originality of the reflections and
meditative depth and insight, (14)

scattered through them.

Landor proceeds always by a series of clear and concrete images, "vivified by intellect and emotion". (15) Realizing that language is metaphor he is determined that his shall be distinct metaphor. While he ranges to remote antiquity in search of images

he is best pleased when they are simple and familiar.

I will say then that these
Conversations contain as forcible
writing as exists on earth, (16)

he stated on one occasion. Havelock Ellis claims that:

At the finest, Landor's is not
only the most substantial but also
the most musical of styles. (17)

In the dramatic dialogues he can rarely describe vivacity or progression. Action in these dialogues stands still. In reading Landor one must never hasten towards any climax or focus of interest, for none such exists. The reader must accompany Landor in an open-eyed and leisurely fashion if he is to receive all the enjoyment and exhilaration of this companionship.

Occasionally, however, Landor forgets to take the reader with him. A lack of instinctive sympathy with his reader is one of the weak points in Landor's art. He is so sure of his own way that he sometimes forgets to put into the reader's hands the clue which he needs in order to follow him. Sometimes he makes his characters discuss with much fullness and rotundity of speech questions of learning and curiosity that can be interesting only to himself - in other words, he drones!

Ernst will be given separate treatment in chapter IV but it needs to be said in this context that he continues in the tradition of the dialogue as it has come down to us.

In the twentieth century Paul Valéry stands out as the author of two distinguished dialogues, Eupalinos, ou l'architecte

and L'Âme et la danse and with them he also made a substantial contribution to the dialogue form in our own time. Eupalinos, in its subject matter, is concerned with

these two distinctive qualities of the French genius, the analytical and the constructive; and it is in itself, as a work of art, a fine example of their presence and fusion.⁽¹⁸⁾

The interest shown in structure and technique in these two dialogues makes them akin to those of Socrates. Technical terms used in ship building, seamanship, architecture, mathematics, philosophy, aesthetics, painting and music are discussed at length. Valéry's proposition in these dialogues is to attain precision, lucidity and exposition in matters of ideas. His influence is manifest in a noteworthy dialogue by E.G. Winkler in Die Erkundung der Linie.

In 1952 there appeared a book entitled Hiob der Existentialist. It was Hans Ehrenberg's contribution to religious dialogue. In this work Job becomes the vehicle for five very meaningful dialogues.

It is dialogue that we associate with Job in the Bible - dialogue with his God. This suggests that Job is a dialogische Person. By presenting Job in dialogue form this book is made so convincing that it would be difficult to imagine that any other literary form would have been an improvement upon it.

André Gide, the French novelist, essayist and winner of the 1947 Nobel prize for literature, understood not only French literature but all literature from the point of view of dialogue. It is not surprising, therefore, that he considered his own writing to be

un état de dialogue.

One of his dialogues, Conversation with a German a few years before the war - World War I - has received special attention of late. The German, who had come to Paris just to talk with Gide after getting out of prison, was

...Grève...the translator of
Paludes, Saül, and La porte
étroite, then but twenty-five
years old. (19)

This dialogue received heightened interest because recent speculation and scholarship in Canada⁽²⁰⁾ appears to have established that Frederick Philip Grove's name was a pseudonym for his original name Greve and it would appear that the conversation as it is related by André Gide under the title of Conversation avec un Allemand points to none other than our Canadian prairie novelist, Frederick Philip Grove.

CHAPTER III

KINDS AND FORMS OF DIALOGUES - ATTEMPTS AT A DEFINITION

A dialogue is "a conversation between two or more persons".⁽¹⁾ The term is derived from the Latin dialogus, whose origin is the Greek dialogos. The root of this word, logos, means 'discourse'. The German Dialog - ein Zwiegespräch, entered the language in the eighteenth century from the French. It became a synonym for Gespräch, especially in drama.

The term dialogue is not restricted to one meaning, however. There are different kinds of dialogues. The following variants will be discussed in this chapter: discussion, colloquium, debate, communication and monologue.

It is interesting to note how similar the definitions of these terms are when one examines them in different languages. The Oxford Dictionary, for example, defines 'conversation' as an "interchange of thought and word" or "familiar discourse".⁽²⁾ In French conversation means:

échange de propos, sur un ton
généralement familier, entre⁽³⁾
deux ou plusieurs personnes.

Grimm's Wörterbuch defines Gespräch as:

unterredung zweier oder mehrerer
personen namentlich in zwangloser
unterhaltung.⁽⁴⁾

The word Unterhaltung, however, has a somewhat less serious connotation, implying that it is a

gesellschaftliches hin- und
herreden zwischen personen.⁽⁵⁾

The composition of the word Gespräch is worthy of note. It is made up of the noun Sprache - 'speech' or 'language' and the prefix ge-. The word Geschrei is made up in the same way. It consists of the noun Schrei - a cry, and the prefix ge-. The same holds true for other words like Gehöft and Gebirge. In each case the original noun denotes a single unit. But as soon as the prefix ge- is added we get a whole range of mountains, all the buildings making up the Bauernhof, and a multitude of utterances. Thus Gespräch is a collective noun including all kinds of verbal communication.

The same collective meaning is found in words like Gesellschaft, Gemeinschaft, Gewebe, and Gewölk. There the prefix ge- brings the Gesellen, the companions, the Gemeinde, the people of the community, the threads on the weaver's loom and the clouds in the sky together into a meaningful and unified whole.

Another, lesser known definition given in the Oxford Dictionary for conversation is, "the action of living or having one's being in or among".⁽⁶⁾ It was first used in this sense in 1705. Sixteen years later a similar, somewhat shorter definition made its appearance; namely: "circle of acquaintance, society".⁽⁷⁾ These two definitions are much more personal than the standard one cited above. Conversation is not only an activity engaged in by people - it is people!

The same assertion is made by Hölderlin when he says:

Viel hat erfahren der Mensch.
Der Himmlischen viele genannt,
Seit ein Gespräch wir sind (8)
Und hören können voneinander.

The key words, underlined and translated by the writer, are:

'Since we have been in communication with one another.'

According to Hölderlin language is "das unschuldigste aller Geschäfte", the most innocent of all crafts, as well as "der Güter Gefährlichstes",⁽⁹⁾ i.e., the most perilous of all blessings. By means of language man can bear witness to what he is. However, language also contains a threat to man's existence, for one of its tasks is to disclose 'that which is' through works and to preserve it in them.

Hölderlin states that human existence is based upon language. It is man's possession of language that sets him above the rest of creation. Language, however, occurs only in the exchange of conversation, i.e., through communication. An individual who communicates does not only speak about himself, but gives of himself to his partner, to the Thou, as Martin Buber has put it. He therefore not only participates in the Gespräch, he is the Gespräch!

The term 'discussion' is derived from the Latin discussio, the verb form of which, discutere, means auseinanderschlagen or aflösen, to smash apart or to loosen, to dissolve.

The French language borrowed these two words and they became the noun discussion and the verb discuter. The noun is defined as:

l'action de discuter, d'examiner par le débat; l'échange d'arguments de vues contradictoires.⁽¹⁰⁾

The French translation of the Latin discutere is agiter - to agitate, to shake, to rouse, to stir up, while the definition of discuter is:

examiner (quelque chose) par un débat, en étudiant le pour et le contre; parler avec d'autres en échangeant des idées, des arguments sur un même sujet.⁽¹¹⁾

From French the words 'discussion' and 'discuss' made their way into the English language. The verb means:

to investigate or examine by argument; to sift; to debate,⁽¹²⁾

and the noun is defined as:

examination (of a matter) by arguments for and against; debate; a disquisition in which a subject is treated from different sides.⁽¹³⁾

German also took over these words from the French. The German Diskussion means:

eine lebhafte Erörterung; Meinungsaustausch,⁽¹⁴⁾

and diskutieren:

lebhaft erörtern; Meinungen austauschen.⁽¹⁵⁾

It is interesting to note that Grimm's Wörterbuch does not contain these two words, the reason for which must be that they were still considered to be Fremdwörter rather than loan words in the German language.

There is a noticeable weakening in meaning as these two words make their way from the Latin to the French. The Latin verb has a strong, if not violent, meaning: to smash apart, to loosen, to dissolve. When these words made their appearance in the French

language their strength had become somewhat diluted and the violent connotation was starting to disappear. Discussion had become 'the action of discussing', or 'the examination of something through, or by means of, debate'. It is true that discussion can be heated and debates bitter but the meaning has taken on a more mellow flavour.

The English definitions are almost identical with the French. Both use the word 'examination' as well as 'debate', which will be discussed later.

The German Diskussion and diskutieren have been further weakened in their meaning. Lebhafte Erörterung implies that the discussion could be a heated one but the word Meinungsaustausch implies something reasonable and not too emotional. The adjective diskutabel,

so beschaffen, dass man darüber
diskutieren kann oder sollte;
erwägenswert; annehmbar (16)

further underscores the reasonableness and non-violent nature of the German terms. Indeed, the definition of the adjective sounds like an apology.

In the German definitions the two key words of the French and English definitions, 'examination' and 'debate', are missing. The range of meaning of these two terms in German, therefore, is more limited.

It is evident that the original Latin words have lost some of their force as they were incorporated into the French, English and German languages. Their violent connotations have disappeared and something unemotional has resulted. This is one of the

characteristics of loan words.

Another variation of dialogue, colloquium, colloquy in English, is of Latin origin. It means 'conversation' and is derived from the verb colloqui, 'to converse'. The Latin form, colloquium, is more widely known. The English colloquy did not come into ordinary use until 1844. Besides its original meaning it has come to stand for "an assembly for discussion; a conference; a council".⁽¹⁷⁾

Words of the same family are 'colloquize', to engage in colloquy";⁽¹⁸⁾ 'colloquist', "one who takes part in a conversation; an interlocutor";⁽¹⁹⁾ 'colloquial', "pertaining to colloquy; conversational";⁽²⁰⁾ 'colloquialism', "an expression considered more appropriate to familiar conversation than to formal writing";⁽²¹⁾ and 'colloquialist', "a (good) talker; one who uses colloquialisms".⁽²²⁾ It might be noted in passing that a colloquist is an interlocutor, i.e., a speaker, while a colloquialist is only a 'talker', albeit a 'good' one. Is this an indication of snobism perhaps?

The French equivalent of 'colloquy' or 'colloquium' is colloque:

une conférence entre deux ou
plusieurs personnes.⁽²³⁾

The verb colloquer,

causer ensemble, s'entretenir,⁽²⁴⁾

is also derived from the Latin colloqui. Interestingly enough the word 'colloque' exists in English, too. However, it has a wider meaning than its French counterpart: "a place for conversation (in a monastery)" and "a conference".⁽²⁵⁾

The German Kolloquium is not as general in meaning as the French. It is closer to the second English definition cited. Der Grosse Duden defines it as:

wissenschaftliches Gespräch;
Lehrdiskussion.⁽²⁶⁾

Wahrig's Deutsches Wörterbuch indicates that it is used
besonders zu Lehrzwecken.⁽²⁷⁾

Langenscheid defines it in the same terms but adds that it is a
special kind of conversation, namely that of a

fortgeschrittener Studiumkreis.⁽²⁸⁾

This idea of participation through discussion for senior or advanced students is the basis for courses of the seminar type being offered at more advanced levels to smaller groups of students. This type of course is called 'colloquium'.

There is yet another meaning in both English and French which is germane. The plural form of 'colloquium' is sometimes used as a title. For example, The Colloquies of Southey,⁽²⁹⁾ or Les Colloques d'Erasme.⁽³⁰⁾ Here colloquia is made to stand for 'dialogues'.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'debate' as:

contention in argument; dispute;
controversy; discussion, especially
discussion in Parliament.⁽³¹⁾

The verb 'to debate' is defined as:

to dispute about; to argue; to discuss;
to engage in discussion, especially in a public assembly.⁽³²⁾

Both words entered the language from the French.

The French débat means:

action de débattre, de discuter. (33)

when used in the singular, and:

discussion des assemblées
politiques. (34)

when used in the plural. The verb débattre:

se dit de deux ou plusieurs
personnes qui soumettent une
chose, un point à une con-
testation. (35)

The German noun Debatte is defined as:

Wortgefecht; Erörterung (im
Parlament). (36)

and the verb debattieren means,

heftig erörtern. (37)

Both are loan words from the French.

There is a common denominator in all three definitions - the word 'parliament'. The actual word is part of the definition in English and German and used as an example in the French definition:

les débats du parlement anglais. (38)

The reference to the English Parliament is especially noteworthy.

Both the noun and the verb date from the thirteenth century - the century in which the English Parliament had its beginning as an institution!

When taken out of its parliamentary context it may seem as though the verb 'to debate' is synonymous with the verb 'to discuss'. This is not so. When one considers the French verb form, this soon becomes evident. As débattre is made up of the prefix dé- and the

verb battre, it implies something violent which does not exist in the verb discuter. Débattre implies more heat and anger; discuter, more reflection. Also débattre is hardly ever used when talking about things in general, about theoretical points, which are of little consequence. Discuter is used in such cases. But débattre is used when talking about questions and causes which affect and excite everyone. A discussion can be cool or dragging; debates are always lively.

'Communication', a fourth type of dialogue, is defined as:

the imparting, conveying, or exchange
of ideas, knowledge, etc., whether
by speech, writing, or signs. (39)

Used transitively the verb 'to communicate' means:

to give to another as a partaker,
to impart, confer, transmit. (40)

Used intransitively its meaning is, "to participate; to share". (41)

In French communication means:

action de communiquer; avis;
renseignement. (42)

and the verb communiquer is defined as:

faire savoir quelque chose à
quelqu'un; faire part à
quelqu'un. (43)

The German mitteilen, means:

melden; übermitteln. (44)

It is made up of the preposition mit, 'with', and the verb teilen, 'to share'. Its true meaning, therefore, is: 'to share something with someone'. The noun form Mitteilung is equated with Nachricht, 'news'.

Today the significant element in interpersonal relations is

'communication'. We speak of 'a lack of communication', 'a failure to communicate', and of 'communication gaps'. Youth cannot communicate with its elders, parents cannot communicate with their children, the government has difficulty in communicating its policies to the public.

What causes these difficulties? Is it merely an inability to transmit information? No, for we are bombarded with information from all sides. We receive it from the printed page, from the radio, from the T.V. screen. This, however, is one-way communication. The individual takes everything in passively. There is no opportunity to partake, to share in the discussion of the matter at hand. This is where communication breaks down.

At the personal level, individuals are more interested in hearing themselves talk than in listening to others. Often there is no give and take relationship. We are so pre-occupied with ourselves that we don't realize that the other person has an opinion or point of view also. Thus we talk past each other. And when we do this we are talking to ourselves. We are engaging in monologue.

The word 'monologue' is of Greek origin. Its original meaning is, "speaking alone".⁽⁴⁵⁾ The Oxford Dictionary provides two definitions:

a scene in which a person of the drama speaks by himself, contrasted with 'chorus' and 'dialogue'; in modern use, a dramatic composition for a single performer.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The second definition states that it is also a "talk or discourse of the nature of soliloquy".⁽⁴⁷⁾

The French definition is almost identical:

Scène de théâtre où un personnage est seul et se parle à lui-même. Discours d'une personne qui se parle à elle-même. (48)

Unlike the English, the French has also a verb form, monologuer, "parler seul", (49) which is identical with the original Greek meaning.

The German noun Monolog is equated with Selbstgespräch which means:

Gespräch mit sich selbst, (50)

a 'conversation with oneself'. The verb form Selbstgespräche führen, is defined as:

Monologe halten - mit sich selbst reden, vor sich hin reden. (51)

The purpose of monologue in drama is to present introspection. The character examines his own motives. Perhaps he makes a decision as to what to do next. He comes to terms with the problem and makes a decision to cope with it somehow.

However, monologue is not restricted to the conventional drama. It is the favourite mode of expression in the 'Theatre of the Absurd'. The absurdist view is that life is meaningless. In absurdist plays the author tries to create a sense of meaninglessness. One way of doing this is by having the characters speak nonsense. If they speak nonsense they don't communicate in a rational sense either with the audience or with the other characters. And if you can't communicate with anyone else you might as well use monologue.

A striking example of this is Samuel Becket's play,

Krapp's Last Tape. There is only one character in the play - Krapp. Dialogue, therefore, is impossible. Hence the whole play is a monologue.

The ultimate monologue would be to take one's own life and change it into art by imposing order on it, by finding symbolic patterns in it, by selecting and leaving out things, thereby making it meaningful. Meaningful at least to oneself because as a monologue it may not be meaningful to anyone else.

Albrecht Goes, who has been much pre-occupied with the meaning and practice of the Gespräch, defines it as:

sowohl die elementarste wie die
höchste mündliche Mitteilung von
Mensch zu Mensch, (52)

the most elemental as well as the highest verbal form of communication between individuals. Conversations conducted at lower levels, Goes calls

Vorformen des Gesprächs. (53)

They are Unterhaltung, Selbstgespräch and Auseinandersetzung. These three variants approximate but do not quite reach the level of a real conversation.

Unterhaltung is defined as:

beagliche Mittellage (des
Gesprächs), (54)

a comfortable middle ground or middle position. It is an exchange of thoughts which are neither commonplace nor earth-shattering. It is not exactly idle chatter but neither is it intellectual discussion. It is simply a friendly chat.

The second Vorform is the Selbstgespräch, the monologue.

It is most often found in classic tragedy. There it is not a Verlegenheitseinschiebsel but, "eine organische Figur".⁽⁵⁵⁾ It gives the hero a chance to justify himself, to clarify his confused thoughts and to develop them.

Conversations in which the opposite partner is merely a listener, where the inequality of the two partners is evident fall into this category. Eckermann's Gespräche mit Goethe is a telling example of this kind of Selbstgespräch.

The third variant is the Auseinandersetzung - a setting apart, or side by side, of two opposing points of view. It implies a coming to grips with the subject at hand by taking a definite stand or position on the matter. The English rendering of this term is 'discussion'. It is a more advanced form of conversation in Goethe's view and superior to the second form, the monologue. In the Auseinandersetzung the participants are real persons.

This kind of 'conversation' is not at home in the clear, austere atmosphere of problems, desires and goals. Words here are not like tennis balls which are thrown to the opponent - they are like rapier thrusts which are parried.

Understanding can be achieved through Auseinandersetzung but misunderstandings can result, too. These dangers are inherent in the word. The danger is that instead of zusammenkommen, 'coming together', one gets farther and farther apart: man setzt sich auseinander. The possibility exists that a two-sided monologue will

be carried on, a monologue which is doubly painful in that one partner will speak past the other,

dass man "aneinander vorbei" redet. (56)

According to Adam Müller⁽⁵⁷⁾ several requirements are necessary for a true conversation. There must be two utterly different speakers who are a mystery to each other and unfathomable. These two persons must have something in common, there must exist between them faith and trust and a common ground of truth and justice.

People who want to conduct a dialogue must have something to say to each other, something that is unique, they must be frank and open with each other. Although the two are different there must exist the desire to try and come together and understand, to commune with each other.

Only dialogue conducted between 'persons' deserves the name Gespräch, Goes maintains. Even though the opposite partner may be wrapped up in his dream world, even though he may be clinging frantically to a strange ideology, the possibility still exists that the protective layers, the dividing walls will be broken down. If this happens the real person inside the individual is reached. He may then open up and confide in the other person.

If the other partner is not a 'person' but a functionary, or a representative of a functionary, i.e, an emissary, no dialogue is possible. For the functionary is not a person, though on occasion he may appear amiable and obliging. He is a 'non-person' and nothing that he says is meant to be obliging. He is obliging because he is

not a 'self', he is part of a system whose character is to be asked questions but not to answer and not to assume any responsibility.

Martin Buber once said:

Das echte Gespräch... bedeutet
Akzeption der Anderheit.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Before an individual whose point of view is different from that of his Gesprächspartner can convince him that his point of view is the correct one, he must be willing to see the other person as he really is and accept him without reservation. If this can be achieved, a break-through to the Thou will result and true dialogue will ensue.

CHAPTER IV

AN INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED DIALOGUES OF PAUL ERNST

DER DICHTER UND DAS ERLEBNIS

Ein unbekanntes Gespräch Goethes mit Eckermann

The word Erlebnis is derived from erleben which consists of the prefix er and the verb leben. The prefix er was once identical with ur meaning 'first' or 'original'. The relationship between er and ur is still preserved in words like Urlaub, Urteil, Ursprung, Urkunde, Ursache, Urheber and Urfehde. The noun Urlaub, for example, which is 'a leave' or 'a vacation', comes from the verb erlauben, 'to permit', or 'to allow'. Its literal meaning therefore is 'a leave that has been permitted or allowed'. Interestingly enough Urlaub is the noun form of erlauben in early New High German.⁽¹⁾

In Old High German er was an independent preposition meaning "heraus aus"⁽²⁾ and suggested a movement from the depths to the surface. This meaning is still preserved by such words as:

erlesen, erschöpfen, erschliessen,
erbrechen, erheben, errichten.⁽³⁾

In time this meaning gradually faded away and er has only retained the function which the prefix ge had earlier, that of making the verb denote a momentary occurrence. This occurrence indicates a state of being and is still seen in words like:

gebären, gebühren, gedeihen,
gelingen, genesen, geschehen,
gestatten, gewähren, gewinnen,
gewöhnen. (4)

Another function of the prefix ge is to indicate the completion of an action. Examples are: gearbeitet, gefahren, geschrieben, gewartet, gezeigt. In this case it is not the infinitive but the past participle which indicates that an action has been finished or completed.

In words like:

ereilen, erjagen, erlangen,
erleben, erblicken, erforschen,
erlernen, ergründen, erfahren, (5)

the prefix denotes that one achieves something spatially which is then transferred to the intellect, or that one acquires something.

Grimm's Wörterbuch equates the verb erleben with erfahren which is given as a rendering of the Latin diem videre. This 'seeing of the day' results in Erfahrungen or Erlebnisse, terms that are synonymous.

Klappenbach and Steinitz define erleben as:

durch etwas von aussen Einwirkendes
betroffen und in seinen Empfindungen
beindruckt werden, (6)

and erfahren as:

von etwas Kenntnis erhalten, etwas
zu wissen bekommen. (7)

The verb erleben indicates that we participate in the process of experience, that we 'live' it. Similarly the verb erfahren indicates that we participate in the process of fahren. The meaning

of the words thus establishes itself from the thing that we seize hold of or from the way that we get there.

Erfahrung denotes

bestimmte Kenntnisse oder
Einsichten, zu denen jemand durch
meist wiederholte Wahrnehmungen
gelangt ist,⁽⁸⁾

while an Erlebnis is a

Geschehnis, das jemand erlebt
hat und durch das er stark und
bleibend beeindruckt wurde.⁽⁹⁾

It is interesting to note that the Afrikans word herlewe, which closely resembles erleben, does not in fact mean the same. It means "to re-live", or "to experience again",⁽¹⁰⁾ rather than to experience for the first time. Is it not this kind of 're-living', this kind of experience, which the reader has when he reads a poem like Goethe's Willkommen und Abschied? He re-lives Goethe's ride to Sesenheim - he shares the event through the medium of language into which it has been translated.

The term Erlebnis operates at more than one level with regard to poetic experiences. First it is the experience of the poet which leads to the writing of the poem. Second, it is the experience which the reader has as he reads the poem. As he reads the poem he not only participates in the original experience but also in the creative process.

This creative process follows a recognizable pattern. First there is the experience, the Wahrnehmungsakt, the Erlebnis, which the poet has. This experience is acted upon by the imagination, the Phantasie or Einbildungskraft which produces all kinds of associations,

such as similarities or contrasts. The imagination later recalls the experience within the context of these associations. This Wiedererinnerung results in Erinnerungsbilder.

Wiedererinnerung ist zugleich
Metamorphose, ⁽¹¹⁾

maintains Dilthey, making the whole creative process a metamorphosis, a continuing Wandlung and Verwandlung, continuing change and continuing progress. The end product is the translation of the experience, its reproduction into language.

The term Erlebnis was first introduced into literary criticism by Wilhelm Dilthey who is closely associated with what has come to be known as Geisteswissenschaft, a system of thought in which all nature and experience are explained in terms of ideas, or products of the intellect, as contrasted with systems based on materialism, realism, or determinism. Dilthey regarded the external world as a representation arising out of pure experience, with both will and thought being a factor of knowing and of self-consciousness.

The publication of Dilthey's book, Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung, in 1905, was indeed a landmark. Its appearance at this particular time was regarded as a forceful reaction to the factual and positivist approach of historicism.

As the title of the book implies there is a direct relationship between Erlebnis and Dichtung:

Der Dichter lebt in dem Reichtum
der Erfahrungen der Menschenwelt,
wie er sie in sich findet und
ausser sich gewahrt. ⁽¹²⁾

The world of the poet is full of experiences. They are all around him as well as inside him. The Erfahrung or Erlebnis forms the basis of "poetisches Schaffen".⁽¹³⁾ Each and every work produced by a poet, Dilthey maintains, is the result of a single experience:

Jedes poetische Werk ist Darstellung
eines einzelnen Geschehnisses.⁽¹⁴⁾

If the task of the artist is to render visible what otherwise would remain invisible, then the task of the poet must be to translate into language and make accessible to everyone that which would otherwise remain unspoken. The task of the poet, or the aim of poetry, is stated in these words by Goethe:

Der Dichter ist angewiesen auf
Darstellung. Das höchste derselben
ist, wenn sie mit der Wirklichkeit
wetteifert, d.h., wenn ihre
Schilderungen durch den Geist der-
gestalt lebendig sind, dass sie als
gegenwärtig für jederman gelten
können.⁽¹⁵⁾

Ernst's conception of the nature and role of the poet is somewhat different from that of Goethe. It is essentially a religious one. Ernst conceives of art in general and literature in particular as closely related to religion. In his theoretical work Ein Credo he states:

Grosse Kunst kann immer nur
Ausdruck der Religion sein.⁽¹⁶⁾

Grosse Dichtung ist immer religiös;
Religion, wenn sie lebendig und nicht
tot überkommen, geht immer Hand in
Hand mit grosser Dichtung.⁽¹⁷⁾

These forceful assertions explain why he could neither tolerate the

l'art pour l'art tendencies of his day nor compromise with the Naturalists whose objective portrayal of familiar, daily circumstances and activities he condemned.

Ernst contends that the chief aim of humanity is to develop human personality until it approximates that of God. From this it follows that the proper substance of art is an interpretation of that goal to humanity since the main purpose of art is to induce humanity to strive towards it:

Der Dichter muss mit seinen Mitteln
den Menschen seiner Zeit ihre besondere Aufgabe zeigen. Da diese Aufgabe die Art ihrer Lebensführung ist, so hat er das Leben in seinen wesentlichen Äusserungen darzustellen, so wie es Gott ihm ins Herz gelegt hat, Gefühle darstellen, die sie haben sollen, ihre Erlebnisse, ihre Schicksale, sie selber und ihre ganze Welt. (18)

Since the poet's inspiration comes from God his works are God-given. This point is made explicit in the dialogue Der Geburtstag des Dichters by one of the protagonists. Mathilde, the young woman with whom the Dichter had an affair some twenty years earlier, claims that it is she who has inspired him to write the works which have brought him fame these past twenty years. The poet cannot understand how anyone could be so naive for it is obvious that Mathilde has no idea what creativity is. She is not aware that the poet is God's mouthpiece:

nichts als dieses Gottes Mundstück, (19)

that a poem is an unexpected gift from above:

ein unverhofftes Geschenk von oben. (20)

Since art and literature are essentially religious, the poet resembles a prophet in his relationship to God and humanity:

Weil seine Gedichte sein neues
Gottgewolltes, in ihn bei der Geburt
gelegtes, im Lauf seines Lebens offen-
bartes Weltbild darstellen, deshalb
ist er ein Gesetzgeber. Nach seinem
Weltbild werden sich die künftigen
Geschlechter bilden; er hat also die
schwerste Verantwortung zu tragen,
eine schwerere, als irgend ein anderer
Mensch. (21)

The poet is an intermediary between God and man, interpreting the divine will to humanity. He sets the example which men will follow thereby exerting a tremendous influence on mankind. He is accountable to God for this power, however, and therefore has a great burden of responsibility to bear.

As a prophet and intermediary the poet stands alone. No one can enter his circle. This is the lot of all geniuses. It would be pointless for a poet to bring this home to a person like Mathilde for he would only look like a show-off.

Ernst has Flaubert and Maupassant discussing the poet's Weltbild and its effect on mankind in the dialogue, Das Land der Dichtung. There Flaubert makes the comment:

Du dichtetst, damit der Kaufmannsschwung,
wenn er sich in die Verkäuferin verliebt,
mit ihr im Lande deiner Dichtung lust-
wandeln und die Natur in ihm genießen
kann. Jene Bürger, die am Sonntag nach-
mittag dort ins Freie gehen - gehen sie, um
soundsoviel Morgen Wiesenland und so
viel Morgen Wald anzusehen? Vor
Jahrhunderten hat Ronsard ein Frühlingslied
gedichtet; sie haben nie den Namen
Ronsards gehört und wissen nichts von

seinem Frühlingslied, aber sie gehen
in dem Lande der Dichtung, das er
geschaffen, indessen er verzweifelt
in seiner Stube sass und in seiner
widerspenstigen Sprache nach Worten
suchte um eine Empfindung, nicht
auszudrücken, sondern zu schaffen. (22)

The same point is made by Dante in his conversation with Giotto entitled, Qualität und Niveau, Dichter und Maler. Dante confides that he has been greatly influenced by Giotto's paintings since he first saw one of them in Padua:

...seit dieser Zeit ist Eure Art,
die Menschen zu sehen, auf mich
übergegangen, neben vielen anderen
Arten anderer Dichter und auch Maler
freilich; so dass ich in gewisser
Weise in manchem durch Euch beherrscht
werde und selbst ein anderer Mensch
geworden bin. (23)

It is the possession of a Weltbild that really makes the poet:

In Wirklichkeit ist der Künstler
aber ein Mann, der ein neues
zunächst nur in ihm vorhandenes
Weltbild in sich trägt, das er
dann mit schwerer Arbeit, so gut
er kann, sinnlich darzustellen sucht... (24)

Portraying this Weltbild is schwere Arbeit - arduous labour, for the poet. Holthusen uses even more expressive adjectives to describe the poet's efforts. He declares it to be:

eine fürchterliche, oft verzweifelte
schwere Arbeit. (25)

A Weltbild, for Ernst, is:

not so much a picture of the world as
it is, as rather a conception of the
world as it could become developed under
moral influence, from its present state. (26)

He believed that the Weltbild was based on much emotional perception and a large element of faith in God. He insisted that the artist must be capable of feeling passionately and reacting powerfully to experience. The latter is one characteristic which both Ernst and Goethe felt a poet must have. Goethe for one certainly lived up to this requirement as evidenced by his love poetry.

The social function of the poet who has a Weltbild is to pass it on:

In der menschlichen Gesellschaft haben die Dichter ihre bestimmte Aufgabe, wie irgend ein Glied eines Körpers für den Körper eine Aufgabe hat, und was sie schaffen, das entspricht nicht etwa einer subjektiven Willkür, sondern das ist in ihnen entstanden durch die Notwendigkeiten der Gesellschaft, die ihre Arbeit brauchte. (27)

Der Dichter muss mit seinen Mitteln den Menschen seiner Zeit ihre besondere Aufgabe zeigen. Da diese Aufgabe die Art ihrer Lebensführung ist, so hat er das Leben in seinen wesentlichen Äusserungen darzustellen so wie es Gott ihm ins Herz gelegt hat, wie Gott also die Menschen der Zeit führen will: er muss die Gefühle darstellen, die sie haben sollen, ihre Erlebnisse, ihre Schicksale, sie selber und ihre ganze Welt. (28)

Flaubert is made to express the same opinion to Maupassant:

Denn der Dichter dichtet ja für die anderen. (29)

Ernst set himself the same task. Like the the poet in Der Geburtstag des Dichters he wanted to create works,

welche die Menschheit lange Jahrhunderte erfreuten und beglückten. (30)

As its sub-title indicates the dialogue Der Dichter und das Erlebnis took place between Goethe and Eckermann. The fact that Eckermann is Goethe's Gesprächspartner here is significant. It immediately places the conversation in perspective: it took place in the last years of Goethe's life. Ernst gives the date as February 29, 1824.

Goethe is looking back over the years from the vantage point of old age. It is the year in which Werther's ghost 'appears' to Goethe:

Noch einmal wagst du, vielbeweinter Schatten,
Hervor dich an das Tageslicht, (31)

to speak to him of death and pain:

Wie klingt es rührend, wenn der Dichter singt,
Den Tod zu meiden, den das Scheiden bringt!
Verstrickt in solche Qualen, halbverschuldet,
Geb ihm ein Gott zu sagen, was er duldet. (32)

Many of his closest friends and acquaintances have already departed this life: Schiller in 1805, Friederike in 1813, his wife Christiane in 1816. Goethe is living, in Günther Müller's felicitous phrase, "Das Jahrzehnt der grossen Resignation, (1816-1825)." (33) His thoughts go back to 1771, to his Strassburg student days, to his relationship with Friederike Brion, the Pfarrerstochter in Sesenheim. These memories are not evoked, however, by a re-reading of his poems of the time, but rather by the study of a young scholar dealing with the personality of Friederike Brion and Goethe's experiences in Sesenheim.

Goethe is visibly upset by the contents of this study:

Ich hatte Goethe noch nie so
erregt gesehen, und ich erschrak
vor den Blitzen seiner Augen, (34)

says Eckermann. As he reads what this man has written about Friederike and him, Goethe becomes very emotional and breaks into tears:

Jetzt rollten ihm grosse Tränen
die Wange hinab. (35)

A few minutes earlier he had confided:

Ich habe immer viel und leiden-
schaftlich erlebt. (36)

On another occasion:

Was ich nicht lebte und was mir
nicht auf die Nägel brannte und
zu schaffen machte, hab ich auch
nicht gedichtet und ausgesprochen.
Liebesgedichte habe ich nur gemacht,
wenn ich liebte. (37)

For Goethe, Erlebnis is a personal, vital experience. It has often been misinterpreted by critics who believe that the heroes in his works, Werther for example, are really replicas of their creator:

In meiner Jugend schrieb ich den
Werther und gab freilich in dem
Werkchen viel zu viel von meinem
persönlichen Empfinden, denn in der
Jugend kann man das Zufällige und
Notwendige in seiner Persönlichkeit
noch nicht genügend voneinander halten.
Da haben sie sich verwundert, dass ich
mich nicht totgeschossen habe, wie der
Narr. (38)

Others, Fairley for example, assume that only parts of Werther contain "many inner and some external biographical facts" (39) of Goethe's personal life. Graff takes him to task for this and argues that

only by dwelling on the first part of Werther and ignoring the end can we go along with any kind of Erlebnis interpretation. (40)

By using Werther as an example, Fairley shows how inattentive Graff really is and how this inattentiveness gets him involved in patent self-contradiction.

Goethe regrets having revealed too much of his personal sensitivity in his works. He envies Schiller who did just the opposite:

Wie beneide ich Schiller! Er hatte den Hochmut, mit der man diese Kanaille behandeln muss, von seinem Erleben werden die Leute nichts in seinen Schriften aufspüren. (41)

He resents this Schnüffeln, this Durchwühlen of other people's Privatangelegenheiten. He calls this kind of literary activity an impertinence,

eine Frechheit, eine Achtungslosigkeit, wie sie nur die Deutschen haben. (42)

It is the opposite of legitimate literary criticism:

In solchem Bemühen finde ich eben den deutschen Spiessbürger, der niemals eine Ahnung davon verspüren wird, was Poesie ist. Diesen Mangel nennt er dann wissenschaftlichen Sinn. (43)

Another important theme in this dialogue concerns the creative mind. Eckermann perceives the motive for the young scholar's research as an attempt,

das geheimnisvolle Wirken der Phantasie zu erkennen. (44)

Dilthey set himself the same task in his book Das Erlebnis und die

Dichtung. According to German literary critics the artist's mind is

a special region not shared by the rest of us. (45)

As they continue their reading of the study before them Goethe remarks:

Wenn dieser einfältige Gelehrte weiss, dass ich an einem Abend aus meinem Gartenhaus ging, dass Nebel war und der Mond in einer gewissen Höhe stand, da hat er das Erlebnis für meine Verse Füllest wieder Busch und Tal. Was nützt ihm denn das? Ich kann das erleben, dass ein Gedicht entsteht und er nicht. Wenn er Goethe wäre, so könnte er es erleben. (46)

We all have experiences. The difference between us and the poet is that he can translate his into language:

Durch einen als Dichter bewusst lebenden Menschen wird es (das Erlebnis) überhaupt schon gedichtet, wenn es erlebt wird, (47)

says Goethe. When this has been achieved the experience becomes accessible to everyone. The experience is then no longer a subjective thing, but an objective one. It has transcended the personal sphere and has become universally applicable and significant.

Literary research inspired by Dilthey has been termed geisteswissenschaftlich. In determining the artistic value of a poetic work Geisteswissenschaft not only concerned itself with the thought-content of a poetic work but also with

the philosophy of the poet behind the work and the spirit of a generation, of an epoch. (48)

This led to a kind of criticism which stressed:

The Life and Works of such and such, ⁽⁴⁹⁾

as evidenced by familiar series of 'lives and works', Geisteshelden, or the 'English Men of Letters'. By the middle of the twentieth century this approach was seriously questioned by Wolfgang Kayser in his book, Das Sprachliche Kunstwerk, Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft:

Biographical, sociological and geisteswissenschaftliche orientation and methods of research in literary history, impede the fulfilment of the real task, while aesthetic and 'formal' methods lead to the centre and are the real concern of literary criticism. ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Kayser reacts strongly against the critical tendencies of Dilthey and his followers. While their approach to literary research was in vogue, 'history of literature' threatened to kill 'literary criticism'. During this period scholarly research and literary criticism were based on the poetic work as a document.

It is Dilthey's biographical approach with its emphasis on biography and autobiography which Fairley takes to task in his article, "Erlebnis... and All That". Ernst takes a similar stand in this dialogue. He detests the Schnüffeln of the young scholar and criticizes the use of biography in literary criticism. A vital experience is something different from a biographical fact.

Fairly is of the opinion that the Erlebnis method of criticism has been done to death, that excesses have been committed in the name of this theory. However, not Dilthey but his followers are to blame for this. They have made a dogma, eine alleinseligmachende

Lehre, out of it. Dilthey understood Erlebnis to be a cumulative experience but his followers have changed it to mean a single, particular experience. Why? Because particular, single experiences lend themselves to research and conjecture, the full experience less readily.

After fifty years of Erlebnistheorie, critics had come perilously close to the position that

a work which can be assigned its
specific Erlebnis is more important
than one which can't. (51)

Fairley's article was an attempt to correct this. By rather strained means, unfortunately, he tries to prove the Erlebnistheorie inadequate. His most convincing example is Heine's Lieder. If we apply Goethe's statement about writing love poetry 'only when he was in love' to Heine, it seems impossible that Heine could have had enough time to write all of his 500 songs. He would have had too little time to make a good job of either one or the other.

In his rebuttal to Fairley's arguments, Graff shows himself to be more moderate. He chides Fairley for condemning everyone who does not believe as he does. He wonders if there is not "a good deal of pedantry and shallow thinking" (52) in Fairley's attitude. Graff points to Fairley's deviousness in proving that the Erlebnis method can work and does work, no matter what Eudo Mason or others have to say to the contrary. He appeals for reasonableness in this regard:

Why not be openminded and let the
light shine from whatever source it
may come, as long as it clarifies the
object of study? (53)

He agrees with Fairley's conclusion that the search for Erlebnisse "cannot enhance the work or improve the author"⁽⁵⁴⁾ but he suggests that it may nevertheless improve and enhance our 'understanding' and 'appreciation' of both.

Both articles, although almost diametrically opposed in their point of view, are necessary correctives for the excesses of Dilthey's followers. Rather than canceling each other out they complement each other. Graff, in his article, is more convincing in that he strikes a middle road, though it must be stated that Fairley makes this claim for himself.

There are striking affinities with Eckermann's Gespräche in Der Dichter und das Erlebnis. In the latter text, for example, we find the following statements:

Das ist eine Frechheit, eine
Achtungslosigkeit, wie sie nur
die Deutschen haben.⁽⁵⁵⁾

In solchem Bemühen finde ich eben
den deutschen Spiessbürger, der
niemals eine Ahnung davon verspüren
wird, was Poesie ist.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In Eckermann's Gespräche mit Goethe we read:

Die Deutschen aber gehen jeder seinem
Kopfe nach, jeder sucht sich selber
genug zu tun; er fragt nicht nach dem
andern.⁽⁵⁷⁾

"Die Deutschen", sagte er, "können die
Philisterei nicht loswerden".⁽⁵⁸⁾

And in Dichtung und Wahrheit we find similar statements:

... die Deutschen, bei denen überhaupt
das Gemeine weit mehr überhand zu nehmen
Gelegenheit findet als bei anderen
Nationen.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Der Deutsche, seit beinahe zwei
Jahrhunderten in einem unglück-
lichen, tumultuarischen Zustande
verwildert, begab sich bei den
Franzosen in die Schule, um lebens-
artig zu werden, und bei den
Römern, um sich würdig auszudrücken. (60)

It should also be noted that there are no colloquialisms or coarse expressions in Der Dichter und das Erlebnis. Goethe is once more portrayed in a Südlicht. The language appears smooth and polished and has a written quality. These similarities present an interesting problem. Has Ernst succeeded in recreating Eckermann's style in this dialogue or has he achieved a far greater accomplishment? Has he perhaps been able to imitate Goethe's style? Is it possible that he was able to achieve such a degree of empathy with Goethe that he could feel, think and speak like him? Perhaps his sojourn of some twelve years in Weimar had something to do with this. Thomas Mann achieved this empathy in his novel Lotte in Weimar.

MÄZEN UND KÜNSTLER

The term Mäzen is derived from the name of the distinguished Roman statesman Gaius Maecenas, the friend, sponsor and supporter of Horace, Virgil and Propertius. Maecenas was affluent and kept an open table at his house for literary men. Because of his encouragement and direction of these men his name has become a synonym for a patron of the arts.

In its narrowest sense, patronage is

the exercise of bounty by a person of authority and means towards poets, writers and scholars, who could be regarded as contributing to his honour by their work.⁽¹⁾

Besides the patronage by individuals mentioned above, there existed in Greece another kind, the patronage exercised by a whole community. Through this kind of patronage Greek dramatists and poets were awarded prizes by their fellow-citizens after public competition.

In the Middle Ages scholars were maintained for the most part in their monasteries. However, rulers, private individuals and large, more public organizations, continued to act as patrons. As early as 782 there existed corporate bodies, notably that of Alcuin, which had been founded "to pursue and cultivate literature."⁽²⁾ In

many European towns Chambers of Rhetoric, or the municipality itself, acted as patron - notably in Zürich and Nürnberg.

The patron, however, gradually changed his attitude. At first he employed professional bards and minstrels in his household. He honoured these itinerants and occasionally domesticated them. Then he turned from the general entertainer to the conscious artist whom he patronized purely for his artistic talent.

Until the invention of printing and the instituting of the honorarium the poet without means was dependent upon patrons. Scholars, poets and artists were able to do their work because of the commissions and pensions which they received from their patrons who were able to appreciate their work as connoisseurs.

This was particularly the case in Italy during the Renaissance. There, for a brief period, political conditions were peculiarly favourable to the sponsoring of intellectual and artistic activity. In many cases, tyrants and condottieri who had no legitimate title to the political power they enjoyed, tried to justify themselves by becoming distinguished patrons of arts and letters. Notable among these were the Sforza in Milan and the Medici in Florence. The Sforza employed such artists as Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante, while the Medici built palaces, commissioned painters and sculptors to decorate them and supported scholars in the work of translation and in the collecting of libraries.

The Renaissance was spread to the rest of Europe by wandering Italian artists and craftsmen, but individual schools soon developed in each country. These were supported by emperors, kings and

noblemen. The practice of supporting needy artists continued. By the nineteenth century the middle class had taken an interest in supporting the arts, too.

At the end of World War I royalty and the nobility had been decimated. It now fell upon the middle class to continue the practice of patronage. Soon, however, a new kind of patron appeared, especially in America. These new patrons were not wealthy individuals who appreciated art, but wealthy corporations and foundations - we only need to mention the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, and the William C. Whitney Foundation.

In Canada, too, large corporations and foundations have become patrons of the arts. In recent years, however, various levels of government have come to the aid of cultural and artistic endeavours. Thus local school boards give grants to symphony orchestras, civic governments give grants to theatre companies, provincial governments subsidize cultural projects, and the Canada Council, an agency of the Federal Government, gives assistance to scholars and artists.

In the history of German art there is one artist whose name cannot be mentioned without immediately bringing to mind the name of his patron. This man is the painter Hans von Marées, who was born at Elberfeld in 1837. Marées experienced his künstlerische Berufung early in life. In 1853 he went to Berlin, where he studied for two years under Steffek. For the next eight years he worked mainly in Munich, and in 1864 he went to Rome. In 1873 he received his most important commission, the painting of frescoes in the library of the

Zoological Museum at Naples.

Marées was ambitious but lacked self-confidence and in the latter part of his life he stopped exhibiting his work. He died in Rome in 1887, a disappointed and practically unknown man. It was not until his works were collected at the Munich exhibition in 1891 that their real value became apparent. Today his works occupy a prominent place in the Pinakothek in Munich.

In this dialogue Hans von Marées has come to his patron, Konrad Fiedler, to ask him for a loan of 1,500 Thaler. However, he does not expect Fiedler to lend him the full amount. If Fiedler will lend him 500 Thaler, Marées is certain that other private individuals will contribute the rest.

Fiedler, who has been supporting his protégé for some considerable time now, is hesitant. He is not yet convinced of Marées' talent. Marées is offended by this lack of faith on the part of his patron. He rebukes Fiedler for even suggesting such a thing. Fiedler, deeply hurt, states that he will continue to support him but that it would be better if they did not meet again.

And thereby hangs the tale. However, the tale is not so much in the dialogue itself as in the background to it.

Fiedler was one of those individuals who heard and responded to the plea of Martial, the first century Roman poet, who cried:

Gebt uns Mäzenate dann wird es
auch Virgile geben. (3)

He had met Marées in Rome in 1866. Their meeting seemed strangely predestined. Fiedler, a lawyer by profession and with independent

means, was visiting Rome at the time. Marées was supposed to be copying the great masters there for his patron, Count Schack. However, when Marées 'did not produce', Schack withdrew his financial support.

It was at this critical stage in his life and work, the time when he was just finding his direction, that Marées turned to Fiedler for help. Fiedler agreed to support him. His support was unrestricted and it gave Marées the freedom to work with no strings attached.

Marées loved to discuss art with his patron. He had been attracted by Fiedler's "Scheu und auch Sprödigkeit"⁽⁴⁾, and he appreciated his

Sorgfalt der Sprache und die Ruhe
eines dem Abstrakten vertrauten
Geistes.⁽⁵⁾

Fiedler had been devoting a great deal of his time to philosophical and aesthetic problems and had published a book, Über die Beurteilung von Werken der Bildenden Kunst, which Marées held in high regard.

Ernst's Fiedler knows that a person's view of the world is incomplete without art:

...das Wesentliche ist, dass das Weltbild
ohne die Kunst unvollständig sein würde.⁽⁶⁾

He also realizes that the artist, like the philosopher, has a message for society. Public opinion, however, is opposed to this message. The message, "eine neue Wahrheit",⁽⁷⁾ for contemporary society, has little chance of being heard unless it is spread with the assistance of men like himself.

The message which the artist has for society, this 'new truth', is the one stated by Keats in his 'Grecian Urn':

'Truth is beauty, beauty is truth.'⁽⁸⁾ It is this truth, this beauty, that Marées wants to reveal to his contemporaries, to society, to his Vaterland.

Fiedler has made this ardent wish of his protégé come true by giving him a free hand and material help for his painting. He has invested a considerable amount of money in this artist's career without any collateral being advanced by Marées. Fiedler, as a patron, is generous, trusting and dependable. He has faith in human nature. He wants to help where he can.

Fiedler is not a demanding patron. He does not expect immediate results or immediate repayment of the monies that he lends his protégé. He is interested in his protégé, encouraging him in his letters and during his visits to Rome. He even has his relatives in Rome keep in touch with Marées.

In 1869, Fiedler expanded Marées' artistic horizon by taking him on an extended tour of Spain, North Africa and France. In Paris, Marées visited the Louvre, which to him is

die alte Gemäldegalerie, eine der
schönsten, die es gibt.⁽⁹⁾

Indeed it appears as though Fiedler is always giving, while Marées is always asking or receiving.

As a patron of the arts, Ernst's Fiedler expresses certain views on art. These views so surprise Marées that he exclaims:

Sie sind der erste Mensch, den ich
treffe, der nicht selbst Maler ist und
der weiss, was Kunst ist.⁽¹⁰⁾

It appears as though Fiedler, the layman, was lecturing Marées, the artist, when he expounded his views on art to him. Ernst calls his attitude dozierend. However, Fiedler is probably just reading excerpts from his book.

Marées is happy that Fiedler is able to understand his work but disappointed that the public does not. He is bitter about the reaction of the public to his paintings:

...man malt seine Bilder und denkt,
nun sehen die Leute sie an. Aber
das ist eben der Fehler. Die Leute⁽¹¹⁾
verstehen gar nicht, was man will!

This Gespräch deals in dialogue form with the age-old problem of the plight of the artist in a society which does not understand him or his work. The man of genius and the patron both want to further the cause of the arts but because of their differing views on art their approach is different.

The artist is dedicated to his work, he thinks of nothing else, he literally 'eats, drinks and sleeps art'. Ernst's Marées says of himself:

... ich kann auch wohl sagen, dass
ich diese ganzen Jahre hindurch
höchstens einmal minutenlang an
anderes gedacht habe. ⁽¹²⁾

He is not working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to get rich quickly. He is not interested in amassing a fortune. If he has the wherewithal to pay his expenses and support himself he is happy.

Mir liegt doch nichts daran, viel
Geld zu verdienen, was soll ich

denn damit! Wenn ich zu essen
habe, und Modell, Atelier und
Farben bezahlen kann, dann bin
ich ja zufrieden. (13)

But why is he willing to starve and go begging? He is dedicated because he wants to create, he wants to be able to give of himself, he wants to present gifts to his country, a gift,

das meinem Vaterland ewig zu
Ruhm und Ehre gereichen wird. (14)

He does not want to be a burden on anyone. He is grateful for what his patron is doing for him and does not expect him to make a great sacrifice now.

Dass ein einziger Privatmann
die Opfer bringt, ist ja unter
keinen Umständen zu verlangen. (15)

However, even though he shows gratitude, the artist cannot help but resent the patron's favoured position, his power over him and the influence that he exerts. His patron, who is also a sensitive man, is aware of his protégé's feeling in this regard.

Jetzt berechnet er im stillen,
was ich jährlich ausgabe und findet,
mindestens die Hälfte davon
müsste ich eigentlich ihm schicken - (16)

It is Marées' secretiveness that made his patron feel that his protégé was not making satisfactory progress and wished to hide this fact. Perhaps he also thought back to their first meeting in Rome and why Marées had been dismissed by his previous patron, Count Schack. In any case, Fiedler was left in the dark about his protégé's talent.

The few samples of Marées' work that he did get to see left much to be desired in Fiedler's opinion. One such example, not referred to by Ernst but given by Reifenberg, is the

portrait of the daughter of one of Fiedler's friends in Dresden. Fiedler could see no resemblance between the portrait by Marées and the actual model. Consequently, he felt that his protégé still had a lot to learn. He tried to convey this opinion to Marées as diplomatically as possible:

... ich bin auch immer der Ansicht gewesen, dass ich Ihnen eine Gelegenheit bieten müsse, das was Sie sich in mühevoller Laufbahn errungen auf die höchste Probe zu stellen: aber ich würde mir sehr unaufrichtig vorkommen, wollte ich Ihnen verhehlen - (17)

It is Ernst's Fiedler speaking here. He does not finish the sentence. He is too tactful, too diplomatic, to tell his protégé that he is not as good as he thinks he is, that he is not yet ready to show his work to the public. So convinced was the real Fiedler of this that he tried to dissuade Anton Dohrn, the builder of the Zoological Museum in Naples, from commissioning Marées to paint the frescoes in the museum library there.

If Fiedler had finished the sentence he might have said:

...wollte ich Ihnen verhehlen, [dass sie noch nicht bereit sind, sich dem Publikum zu zeigen.]⁽¹⁸⁾

However, the sensitive painter understood the meaning of the unfinished sentence only too well. Marées' reaction to Fiedler's implied criticism is immediate and explosive. He rejects this prejudgment on the part of his patron. He feels that only he is competent to judge his work and his progress:

... ich kann mich doch nicht über mich selbst täuschen! (19)

he tells his patron.

No longer is Fiedler his friend and supporter, but a "verdammter salbungsvoller Spiesser,"⁽²⁰⁾ a damned, oily philistine, and a 'triviales Vieh'.⁽²¹⁾ Ernst's Marées is rude, offensive and tactless. The real Marées, however, knew that the most important thing that he lacked is tact:

die erste Bedingung, in einer Kunst
etwas Gutes zu leisten, ist der Takt.⁽²²⁾

He now accuses Fiedler of having deliberately humiliated him by not travelling the few miles from Florence to Rome to look at a painting which he was working on. The painting had been intended as a wedding gift for his patron but was never finished. Yet Fiedler remains tactful. Calmly and without anger he replies:

Ich habe jahrelang mit einer
Selbstüberwindung, die mir nicht
leicht geworden ist, jede Empfind-
lichkeit Ihnen gegenüber unterdrückt.⁽²³⁾

Fiedler has been patient, tolerant, long-suffering. But now, irritated and annoyed he tells Marées:

Sie haben selbst den Bann gebrochen.
Sie verlangen zu viel von anderen
Menschen.⁽²⁴⁾

The chiding that Fiedler receives from his wife:

...denke doch nicht so viel an andere,
denke doch auch einmal an dich selbst
und was du deiner Familie schuldig bist...⁽²⁵⁾

is in this context understandable because Fiedler had spent a disproportionate amount of time on Marées and his problems.

It comes as a surprise that Fiedler disregards Marées'

offensiveness. He realizes how difficult it has been for Marées to receive for years without being able to give, only to promise. He knows that Marées is his own worst enemy and he is ready to forgive him.

Der Verpflichtung, die ich übernommen habe, werde ich nach wie vor nachkommen. (26)

Thus he assures Marées of his continuing support.

The values, of the real Marées were inevitably different from those of his patron. He stands in a representative way for the artist and his values while Fiedler and his wife represent the standards and values of middle class society. Marées has rejected society and its values because these values seem hypocritical and false to him. He must be true to himself:

Gegen meine Ueberzeugung kann ich nicht handeln; wer das thut, muss sich schliesslich in Unwahrheiten verstricken, und da wäre es ja besser, gar nicht zu existieren. (27)

Marées is a perfectionist. That is why he needs so many Anläufe before he can finish a work which meets his demands. However, his physical and mental make-up also have a bearing on his creative output:

Leider bin ich nun einmal so unglücklich organisiert, dass ich nur unter ganz bestimmten Umständen etwas zu leisten im Stande bin... (28)

he once confided to Fiedler.

These ideal conditions were not provided by Count Schack,

who had demanded tangible results for his investment in Marées. When these were not forthcoming he had dismissed Marées. However, Marées does not feel solely responsible for his inability to keep his promise to Schack:

Man kann nicht sagen, dass meine Lage ganz und gar durch mich selber herbeigeführt wurde; hätten sie mir nicht versprochen, als ich nicht mehr copiren wollte, dass ich bequem, anständig und sorgenfrei meiner Kunst leben könne,... so wäre das Resultat schon ein ganz anderes gewesen. (29)

Schack had not kept his part of the bargain. His support diminished and finally came to a dead stop. Marées had considered Schack to be morally obligated to support him, but Marées did not feel obligated to 'produce' until he was ready to do so.

If Marées needs money it is only to sustain himself. He has no use for it otherwise.

Wenn ich reich wäre, würde ich wahrscheinlich ebenso leben, wie jetzt, der Ueberschuss würde anderen zugute kommen. Für Besitz habe ich keinen Sinn...(30)

he once told his brother Georg.

As an artist Marées is outside the mainstream of life. He loves the solitude because it gives him a chance to communicate with kindred spirits:

Ich habe Zeiten, wo ich die Einsamkeit über alles liebe, weil ich gerade in ihr am besten verkehren kann, mit denen ich sympathisire. (31)

He does not feel at home in society because he does not like the fast

pace, the hustle and bustle, the noise and confusion. He is ill at ease in society and cannot communicate:

...Je weniger Gesellschaften man frequentirt, um so weniger Missheiligkeiten, hat man. ...Ich bin da immer der steinerne Gast, denn der Henker weiss, wie es zugeht, dass wenn ich in irgend so eine Gesellschaft komme, ich auch nicht so viel Phantasie habe, nur einen Satz zu componiren. (32)

He has always known that society places the greatest obstacle in the artist's way:

Das grösste Hinderniss bleibt stets die gute Gesellschaft, um 'comme il faut' zu sein, bedarf es nicht mehr Verstandes, als des eines Nussknackers, während die verlangten erbärmlichen Rücksichten den Gescheidten seiner besten Zeit und besten Gedanken berauben. (33)

He rejects society because it robs the artist of his time and his ideas.

He is an outsider and unable to relate to others. Since he cannot make himself understood, society misunderstands him. This misunderstanding leads to suspicion and finally to rejection and alienation.

If an artist has

Geduld und Beharrlichkeit, Unverdrossenheit, Unverzagtheit, Liebe zur und Glaube an eine Sache, (34)

there is little danger of his sinking

in's Meer des Spiessbürgerthums. (35)

In other words, with the undivided commitment to his work the artist escapes the danger of his being swallowed up by society and its philistines.

All artists crave recognition and encouragement, especially

from their patrons. Fiedler's refusal leaves Ernst's Marées once more in the lurch. As he leaves Fiedler's house he laments:

Ach es ist ja so furchtbar schwer;
ich bin allein. (36)

This is the loneliness of a person who has been rejected by society, even by his friends. He is not merely allein but an alien, an outsider, an exile.

In this state of loneliness Ernst's artist begins to question his sanity:

Wodurch unterscheide ich mich
eigentlich von einem Verrückten,
den man einsperrt? Wir tun
beide Dinge, die den anderen
Menschen als unsinnig vorkommen,
[...] Bin ich vielleicht
wahnsinnig? (37)

He knows what it means to be different from other people and that between genius and insanity there is only a thin line. Paul Ernst, too, experienced this sense of loneliness, isolation, and exile. And like Marées he remained a stranger and outsider amongst his own people.

Against all contingencies of life and circumstances, Marées remained unswervingly loyal to his uncompromising attitude no matter where it would lead him. His remarkable letters bear eloquent testimony to his single-minded devotion to his calling as a painter. And so his life was lived to

give convincing proof that he was not in error. We may take him to be a truly symbolic representative of that type of artist who is ready to accept all the consequences inherent in the tragic but inescapable view of the Künstler as he understood it. In this he followed his sense of mission.

In this context we cannot help being reminded of the close link evoked by the example Marées provides. We are thinking of another tragic artist, namely Kleist, and it is not difficult to establish parallels between him and Marées when we remember that

even posterity was but slow to
accord (them) that posthumous
fame which is always called the
consolation of misunderstood
and misjudged geniuses. (38)

Both were out of step with the prevailing creeds and artistic ideals of the day.

Like Kleist, Marées was so uncompromising that he would rather break than give in. He had the same battle cry as Kleist, Hölderlin and Nietzsche, "All or nothing!" (39) For him society's Sowohl als auch was impossible. As a consequence it was inevitable that he should come in conflict with the world.

Like all men of genius he would not give in an inch. He could not admit that life is a compromise, that it can only be lived by seeing both sides:

Wer etwas leisten will, darf den
Teufel danach fragen, was man sagt,
sondern muss unverrückt sein Ziel
vor Augen haben; ... Man muss sich
mehr für eine Sache, als für Leute
interessieren. (40)

Marées would rather go down in defeat than give in to bürgerliche Forderungen of any kind. And so he remains uncompromising to the end.

This conflict between the values of the artist and those of middle class society is a perennial one. It has been present for centuries. However, it has become more acute since the Romantic period and has reached extreme proportions today.

In this dialogue, Ernst appears to be prejudiced in favour of Fiedler. Marées is made to be seen in a questionable light - always pleading, begging, demanding, and when he does not get his own way he gives vent to his frustrations by using coarse language. Fiedler, the patron, appears as the great art enthusiast, critic, supporter and friend. At the end, however, it is Marées who wins our sympathy. We admire his singlemindedness and dedication to his creative work. He emerges as the hero, though a tragic one.

Ernst, as a writer, could probably identify better with Marées the artist than with Fiedler, the man of affairs. Marées wanted to create something that would bring honour and

glory to his country. Ernst, too, wanted to do something for his beloved Germany.

Hans von Marées stands in a representative and symbolic way for all of the artists who cannot find a place in society. They are extremely vulnerable to being hurt in their sensibilities. They want to persevere in their vocations in spite of all resistance. Marées is a supreme example of the way resistances work themselves out or become absolute.

Equally Count Schack and Fiedler stand in a representative way for the Aussenstehende, i.e., representatives of society. There is a dichotomy between the two elements. This makes the dialogue absorbing in the sense that in spite of all understanding Marées is given, in the end he is still left in a state of abandonment because material considerations are of no consequence in the pursuit of his art.

Ernst made an excellent choice when he chose the imaginary conversation as the vehicle for the presentation of a timeless conflict. As one reads Marées' letters one cannot but be impressed by the way Marées mastered his difficulties and problems. However, his letters necessarily remain one-sided, they remain monologues.

The dialogue form gets us involved in the conflict. We identify with one or the other of the two protagonists whose conversation turns into a confrontation. The problem takes on a validity which transcends the personal level.

Facts may have been altered, events may have been compressed in time, but the problem has been given a convincing focus. Both sides have their say. It is up to us to decide whether justice has been done. Ernst does not express an opinion of his own. We might say that in this dialogue Ernst presents the case as he sees it, and leaves all judgment in abeyance.

RELIGION UND MORAL

Religion and morality are topics always in vogue. That is why people sit up and listen when someone is discussing them.

At first glance one would expect the participants to be either theologians or philosophers, for it is they who are the authorities on this subject. One would also expect the conversation to be theoretical and dry. However, this dialogue is not a theoretical discussion, even though Kant is one of the participants. On the contrary, it is a dialogue lifted out of an abstract context and brought to life. Religion and morality are shown in action in the life of Kant's Gesprächspartner, a young unmarried mother.

The question immediately arises: Why is Kant one of the participants, and not some other philosopher or theologian? Kant, as is generally known, had a greater influence both during his lifetime, 1724-1804, and afterward than any other philosopher of modern times. He is also remembered for his unorthodox religious teachings, based on rationalism rather than revelation, which brought him into conflict with the government of Prussia. However, he is best known for his Critique of Pure Reason and The Critique of Practical Reason. He is also known for his Metaphysics of Ethics, in which he develops his ethical system which is based on the belief that reason is the

final authority of morality. Actions of any sort, Kant believed, must be undertaken from a sense of duty dictated by reason; and no action performed for expediency or solely in obedience to law or custom can be regarded as moral. For these reasons it seems natural that the moral aspects of the conversation are focussed around Kant.

Kant's view on the relation between morality and religion is contained in the Critiques of theoretical and practical reason. It is further expounded and applied in Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason. However, only passing reference will be made to these works in this context and only if it will help to illuminate the problems at hand. It is not my intention to elaborate on Kant's philosophical ideas as such, but to use them only as a vehicle in the interpretation of this dialogue as they relate to morality and religion.

The name of Kant, his works and the times in which he lived, create their own associations. The reader thus comes to this conversation with a certain mental image and definite expectations.

At the beginning of the dialogue we find Kant trying to persuade a young unwed mother to return home. Her father, who had previously rejected her, is willing to take her back if she will admit that she has broken the law of society and now feels sorry for what she has done. If she is willing to do that, she and her child will once more have a home to call their own. This is the only condition set by her father.

The young woman readily admits that what she has done is considered immoral and wrong by society but at the same time she asserts

that she did right by her lover. She is sorry in one respect, sorry for probably having caused the death of her mother, who died of grief after the father had rejected his daughter. She will not repent, however, so that she and her child will once more have a comfortable home. She does not want to return to a father who considers the mores of society more important than the happiness and welfare of his own daughter.

She tells Kant that it is her father's legalistic attitude that is preventing her from becoming reconciled with him. In her view she did right by her man and she is certain that God will not reject her. She is sure of this because after much thought she has come to the realization that mankind is no longer bound by the law since God sent His Son into this world to set man free from the fetters of the law.

The plot begins approximately a year before this conversation. It starts with the fateful meeting of the young woman and a soldier. The rising action includes the birth of their illegitimate child and the young woman's subsequent rejection by her father. The death of the young woman's mother marks the turning point in the action. This tragic event brings about a change of heart both in the young woman and in her father. The action then starts to fall. The unknitting of the plot, which takes up most of the dialogue, now begins. The conflict is finally resolved in favour of the young woman. The actual conversation lasts less than an hour.

In this dialogue the young mother stands in a representative way for religion, and Kant for the categorical imperative.

The kategorische Imperativ:

Handle so, dass die Maxime deines
Willens jederzeit zugleich als
Prinzip einer allgemeinen
Gesetzgebung gelten könnte... (1)

is the basic law or formula of Kant's Critique of Practical Reason.

Translated and stated in a negative form it is:

I ought never to act except in such
a way that I can also will that my
maxim should become a universal law. (2)

According to H. J. Paton it is:

...the first formulation of all parti-
cular moral laws and all ordinary moral
judgements. (3)

Ernst has the young mother express the categorical
imperative in these words:

...wir müssen so handeln, dass die
Maxime nach welcher wir handeln, ein
allgemeines Gesetz für das Handeln
aller Menschen sein kann. (4)

She tells Kant that she cannot say anything against it but that she
knows it to be false:

...aber ich weiss, dass es falsch
ist. (5)

The young mother exclaims that it must have been diffi-
cult for Kant to write his works and that she probably would not be
able to understand them. However, she probably means just the oppos-
ite, for immediately after this remark, Ernst adds the stage direction:

Sie sieht ihn mit einem schelmischen
Lächeln von unten an. (6)

A short while later it becomes clear that she does indeed understand

the Kantian philosophy, since she always listened to his conversations with her father when she was still at home:

Ich habe immer zugehört, wenn Sie
mit meinem Vater sprachen, und ich
habe es verstanden. (7)

As the conversation progresses, Kant insists that the young woman's father acted sittlich, i.e., morally, in rejecting his wayward daughter. If this is so, she replies, then she must have acted unsittlich, i.e., immorally. And yet each evening she folds her hands and prays: 'And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'. However, her father does not feel any need to pray this part of the Lord's prayer. She wonders why this is so.

She then makes the bold claim that there is no law of morality, but that instead God tells each person what he can and cannot do:

Es gibt kein Gesetz der Sittlichkeit,
sondern Gott sagt einem jeden, was er
darf und was er nicht darf. (8)

She has wrestled with these questions for a long time, she confides, before finally being able to come to grips with them and to understand them.

She agrees with Kant that there is a difference between theology and religion and that many people have one but lack the other:

Viele Leute haben Theologie und
keine Religion: ausser vielleicht,
um dereinst grosse Lastertaten
abzubitten, wenn sie von den Schrecken
der Hölle bedroht werden. (9)

She is convinced that her father is one of these people.

Kant now realizes that the young woman has an understanding of religion and metaphysics which are indeed remarkable. He admits,

...dass es irgend etwas Unerklärliches
gibt, etwas hinter allem, das wir
denken können,⁽¹⁰⁾

i.e., that there exists something that defies rational explanation, something that cannot be grasped by the intellect. He also realizes that as a philosopher he can only speak authoritatively on ethics, and not on metaphysics and religion.

In spite of all this, however, Kant still sides with the father who acts according to the categorical imperative. If he were to disagree with him he would have to deny his whole philosophy. Consequently no compromise is possible. He can only sympathize but not agree with the young mother.

The problem is a complex one. The reader cannot say that one is right and the other is wrong. As the dialogue progresses the reader is inclined to agree first with the one and then with the other. This vacillation on the part of the reader produces even more conflict. The conflict thus operates at two levels: a simple dramatic conflict in the dialogue and an intellectual conflict in the mind of the reader.

A conflict is shown to exist between reason and emotion. Kant is trying to persuade the young woman to return home by showing her that this would be a reasonable thing to do. She answers him with emotional outbursts and arguments that come from the heart.

There is also a conflict between the various emotions of the reader. At first he feels disgust for the young woman's waywardness but as she tells her story the reader's feeling for her changes to pity. Kant, too, appears in a bad light at first. He appears unbending in his attitude, almost cruel. But as the conversation progresses the reader wonders whether Kant is not right after all.

Although the young woman refuses to return to her father, the conflict is resolved. The resolution is not a conventional one. It is propagandistic rather than tragic, i.e., there is an answer if we are prepared to accept it:

...das ist das Grösste, dass Gottes
Sohn gekreuzigt ist; nun sollen wir
wissen, das es keinerlei Gesetz
gibt, sondern nur den Willen Gottes. (11)

She wants to do the will of God because that to her means true worship.

She agrees wholeheartedly with Kant's claim elsewhere:

Die wahre Gottesverehrung besteht
darin, dass man nach Gottes Willen
handelt. (12)

Taking the two terms 'religion' and 'morality' one would expect this dialogue to be a mere theoretical discussion. However, it is saved from being that by its dramatic elements.

The young woman accuses Kant of having instilled in her father the "Hochmut des Denkens" (13) which caused her father to reject her. She demands to know why he proposes laws which he does not intend to obey. She accuses him of being hypocritical, of saying, 'Don't do as I do. Do as I say'.

Like her father, Kant is a member of the establishment

for whose benefit laws are made:

Gehen Sie mit Ihrem Gesetz, das
ist eine Einrichtung für Kaufleute. (14)

He is therefore guilty by association. He is deemed just as much responsible for her predicament as her father. She rejects Kant, her father, and the establishment. She wants no part of him, her father or of a materialistic society, a society which says one thing but does another. Had she been familiar with Kant's works she might have told him, in his words, that 'all that glitters is not gold':

Alles Gute, das nicht auf moralisch-
gute Gesinnung gepfropft ist, ist
nichts als lauter Schein und schim-
merndes Elend. (15)

Does the name Kant and all it conjures up, i.e., its philosophical attributes, really enter into the conversation or is he a person and revealed as such? In other words, does Kant speak as a philosopher or does he speak as a person? She addresses him as Herr Professor and uses the polite form Sie, even though he is a friend of the family and she has known him all her life. Because of this one would have expected her to address him with the familiar Du as one does a dear uncle.

Kant calls her liebes Kind at the beginning but Sie thereafter. He has come as a representative of her father, speaking on his behalf, trying to justify her father's actions:

Er hat sittlich gehandelt. (16)

At the end, however, Kant insists that he would not have acted like her father:

(leise) Ich hätte nicht so gehandelt
wie er. (17)

Unfortunately she appears not to hear this.

This frank admission is followed by another startling
revelation:

Ich bin ein alter Mann und könnte
Ihr Vater sein, und Sie wissen, dass
ich mich nicht von Gefühlen leiten
lasse; aber der Klang ihrer Stimme,
der Blick Ihrer Augen, Ihr Lachen und
Ihr Weinen bewegen mein Herz, und ich
fühle, dass Sie ein Weib sind und ich
ein Mann. (18)

This is only the second time that Kant speaks as a person. We realize now that he, too, is human, that he, too, is a man with feelings and emotions and not just a name. However, this revelation comes too late. It is his final speech and the young woman has already made up her mind. In her last speech, which follows immediately, the problem is resolved, at least to her satisfaction.

Kant plays a dual role in this dialogue. He is a philosopher first and a person next. One role cannot be divorced from the other, at least not as far as the young woman is concerned. She sees him only as a philosopher, her father's friend, and a member of the establishment. Kant tries very hard to appear as a person at the end, but she is not willing to accept him as such. It would seem that his two roles hang inseparably together.

As the conversation progresses, the dialogue deteriorates into monologue. They are both still talking but the one does not hear what the other is saying. Neither is willing to back down from his

position. At the end of the conversation they are still confronting each other.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'to confront' as follows:

to stand or meet facing; to face,
especially in hostility or defiance;
to present a bold front to; to set
face to face or side by side with
for purposes of comparison. (19)

This is exactly what happens in this dialogue. Two people who have known each other for years clash head-on over an intensely personal issue. Tension mounts. The hostility between the protagonist and antagonist manifests itself in accusations and denials. The young woman defies both her father and society.

Both sides of the story are presented. The young woman speaks not only for herself but for her generation as well. Kant speaks for her father but he also speaks as a representative of the establishment. However, Ernst does not judge either one of them. Judgment is left up to the reader.

Seen in a present-day context this dialogue is not so much a Gespräch as it is a confrontation. However, the confrontation is not so much between two people as between religion and morality.

This dialogue points up yet another problem that is topical today - the generation gap. Even though almost two centuries have passed since Kant wrote his Critiques, there still exists a communications problem between youth and their elders. If anything, this problem is more acute now than in Kant's day.

The question which now presents itself is, 'Why haven't these problems been solved after all this time and what causes them

to start with?' A number of reasons for this baffling question come to mind. First, young people have not yet learned how to communicate effectively. Monologue, rather than dialogue, is the means by which they can best express themselves. Young people have not yet learned the give and take of conversation. They are one-sided in their communication and suffer from it. It is not until young people achieve maturity and adulthood that they become capable of and willing to use dialogue.

Young people have different values; as well, their view of life is different from that of the adult. The young person is not materialistically inclined, he lives one day at a time not caring for the morrow. He despises his elders who are slaves to Mammon, who value worldly possessions more than friendship or understanding. Young people,

know nothing of compromise or
extenuating circumstances, nor do
they see below the surface to basic
causes. (20)

All they perceive is what their elders say, what they do, and above all how they behave towards them and the outside world. On this they base their judgments.

The temperament of young people is different. They are still immature, physically as well as emotionally. Their responses are emotional and immediate rather than reasoned, deliberate and slow. They are much more easily aroused than adults, but on the other hand they are much more compassionate and forgiving.

They are overly sensitive, easily offended, reserved and

introspective. They are given to thought rather than action. They prefer to solve their own problems rather than have them solved by adults. Hamlet serves as a telling example here.

Our technologically-orientated society, has accentuated these problems rather than solving them. Affluence and increased leisure have changed our values. Authority has been eroded. Parents have abrogated their responsibilities to institutions. Young people have stopped trusting anyone not belonging to their peer group. There is not much left for them to believe in. Thus they find themselves alone and alienated.

Today's young people are really not much different from the young people of the eighteenth century. Only the times, not the people, have changed. In a way youth finds itself in the same predicament as the artist. The artist experiences the same isolation and alienation as youth and for the same reasons. One look at the life story of Hans von Marées proves the point.

This dialogue is similar in a number of aspects to others already referred to in previous chapters. Der Dichter und das Erlebnis, Mäzen und Künstler, Religion und Moral are all generalized themes but made specific by references to particular persons. Kant, Goethe, Eckermann, Fiedler, Marées are all historical personages and well known. The names of these people create their own associations and we come to these dialogues already prepared by some knowledge of these men.

Religion und Moral like Der Geburtstag des Dichters has only two principal participants. In both dialogues a woman's

point of view is set against and compared with a man's. Also, in both reference is made to the categorical imperative as the morality of certain actions is debated.

The titles of these conversations are worthy of note. They have an arresting quality. For example, religion and morality are abstract terms. One would expect a dialogue with such a title to have a tendency to be dry and dull. The opposite is true, however. These terms come to life in concrete situations. They are shown in action in the lives of the participants.

The young mother in this dialogue is faced with the same problem as Hans von Marées in Mäzen und Künstler, or the poet in Der Dichter und das Erlebnis. The young person, the artist, the poet are all misunderstood by society because they are different. Consequently they stand outside the mainstream of life and feel alone and alienated.

The question which still remains to be answered is, 'How has this dialogue illuminated the theme, i.e., has justice been done to it?'

The problem of morality is just as acute today as it was in Kant's day. If anything, it is a greater problem today in our permissive society than it was then. The difficulty that young people have communicating with their elders has not yet been overcome either. These problems then are just as relevant today as they were in the late eighteenth century.

The dialogue itself is spontaneous. The mention of Kant's works leads to the categorical imperative and from there to the problem

at hand. The conversation flows naturally. There are no Abschweifungen, nothing artificial. The young woman does most of the talking and Kant most of the listening. There is nothing far-fetched here, which could easily happen with names like Kant.

The theme is illuminated not by a critical examination of it in essay form or by weighing its pros and cons in a debate, but by means of dialogue in which two people come to grips with religion and morality by examining what these terms mean in their own lives. The loose ends are tied together and the problem is finally resolved. We can therefore say that this is a dialogue in the round.

AUFFASSUNGEN/DER KÖNIG

As a speaker for the Socialist Party and editor of a Socialist newspaper, Ernst had first-hand knowledge of political institutions, political movements, and the changes these forces bring about. He considered them important enough to examine them in several critical essays and two dialogues. Because of Ernst's political beliefs both dialogues have to be examined in terms of representative ideas for which the participants serve as illustrations.

The first of these ideas is the divine right of kings. The monarchs in both dialogues have been forced to give up their thrones and are awaiting their fate in prison. The king in Auffassungen has had much time to think since his imprisonment:

Unsereins kommt ja sonst nicht recht
zum Nachdenken, (1)

he laments. While in office he was unable to find time for reflection because of his many duties. He needs the isolation which he gets in prison. It is here that he comes to terms with himself.

Only now does he realize what a slave he has been. Maintaining good public relations rather than working at being a ruler has been his main pre-occupation. He blames his education for having left him unprepared for the duties to which he was born:

Die erste Pflicht des modernen Fürsten
ist Liebenswürdigkeit gegen das sogenannte Volk.⁽²⁾

At least that is what he had been taught. As a consequence he considered Liebenswürdigkeit to be his Geschäft. He did not realize that the Liebenswürdigkeit with which he treated his subjects was being interpreted as a sign of weakness, encouraging them further in their revolutionary endeavours. It did not occur to him that

durch die falsche Behandlung der Paria
[die Bourgeoisie] immer unverschämter
wird, bis er [sie] schliesslich die
ganze Welt beherrscht.⁽³⁾

He chides himself for not having followed in the footsteps of his ancestors in stressing his divine right more. He admits, however, that he was too weak to assert himself and that the divine right did not really mean much to him. In his essay Monarchie, Republik und Gottesträgertum, Ernst states:

Um die Aufgabe des heutigen Fürsten
zu erfüllen, gebrauchte es aber einer
bedeutenden sittlichen Persönlichkeit,
die sich naturgemäss so selten findet,
wie Bedeutung überhaupt selten ist:
und das würde denn erklären, dass das
Königtum verschwindet und die republik-
anische Einrichtung an seine Stelle
tritt.⁽⁴⁾

A king must have a strong personality. Few rulers, however, possess this quality. That is why the monarchy is dying out and the republican form of government will replace it.

It is not until the end of the dialogue that the king realizes that the monarchy has outlived its usefulness:

Die Idee von den ewigen Rechten des
Volkes in den Sternen hat die Idee
vom Gottesgnadentum besiegt.⁽⁵⁾

He knows that it was not the army but an idea that brought about his overthrow.

The king in the second dialogue is of a different mettle. While the first king realized that the monarchy had outlived its usefulness, the second monarch cannot accept this position. He is adamant in his stand that he is

König von Gottes Gnaden,⁽⁶⁾

i.e., king by the Grace of God and that he is responsible to God for his country. He admits that kings are no longer a blessing to their people. That belief, he says, is an eighteenth century idea and no longer valid. He does stress, however, that the monarchy is as old as mankind and that at the beginning the king was a kind of mediator between his subjects and God.

As his conversation with his opponent, the 'president', progresses, the king draws a distinction between the kingship and the office of the president. The president is

ein Angestellter des Volkstaats,⁽⁷⁾

i.e., an employee of the democratic State. He has

eine schöne Stelle, acht Stunden täglich
Dienst, gutes Gehalt, Pensionsberechtigung,⁽⁸⁾

i.e., a comfortable job, an eight hour day, a good salary, and the right to a pension. He is

ein ordentlicher, kleinbürgerlicher
Mann,⁽⁹⁾

a respectable middle-class citizen, interested only in his own person. The king, however, carries a heavy burden on his shoulders, a burden laid upon him by God. He cannot dispose of his burden simply by escaping from prison and fleeing the country as suggested by the president.

The king in both dialogues stands in a representative way for a decadent ruling class:

eine...gar nicht mehr herrschaftsfähige
Klasse, (10)

which had to be replaced by something viable.

Ernst's anti-monarchy stand can be traced to the Zusammenbruch in 1918 and the inability of the German monarchy to prevent the country's collapse at the end of the Great War:

Denn unser Zusammenbruch, das wollen wir uns nur ja recht klarmachen, kam daher, dass wir von Männern geführt wurden, welche keine einzige der Fähigkeiten hatten, die zur Führung berechtigt, so dass im Augenblick der höchsten Gefahr das Schiff völlig steuerlos war und ein Soldat, welcher gerade zur Hand war, das Ruder in die Hand nehmen musste und es so führen, wie er als Soldat es nun eben verstand. (11)

The king's cell-mate in Auffassungen is his spiritual adviser, the former archbishop of the country. He speaks as one would expect a high ranking churchman to speak. He quotes Scripture to explain why things are the way they are:

Ich denke: Gott legte Ew. Majestät Vorfahren ins Herz, dass sie so handelten, und Ew. Majestät legte er das andere ins Herz, denn er

hatte seine Absichten mit den
Völkern, die wir nicht kennen. (12)

He ascribes everything that has happened to the will of God. It is precisely this naive belief that Ernst condemns in yet another work, his post-World War I novel, Grün aus Trümmern. It is not the will of God that brings about these chaotic states, he maintains, but a ruling class which is no longer fit to rule.

The archbishop confesses that he was once leichtfertig but now that he, too, is facing death he has become a different person. Curiously enough it is not his faith in God which lets him be calm in the face of death but his high birth:

Ich fürchte mich nicht vor dem
Tod, Majestät, ich bin aus einem
anständigen Geschlecht und weiss
schon zu sterben. (13)

He is shown to be somewhat naive in his thinking that the monarchy would continue indefinitely for he is under the delusion,

...dass das alles so in Ewigkeit
weiter geht, (14)

that they would all live happily ever after.

Though the archbishop may at times be uncertain of his religious convictions he nevertheless feels obliged to express the thought that there must be a God:

...es muss ein Gott sein, der die
Geschicke der Menschen lenkt, sonst
müsste ich ja verzweifeln. (15)

He desperately wants proof that there is a God, otherwise he will expose himself as a fraud.

The king, however, recognizes him for what he is and lets him know that it is faith and not personality that is important:

Es handelt sich also bloss um Ihre
Persönlichkeit, die nicht verzwei-
feln möchte; mir scheint, diese
Persönlichkeit ist nicht so wichtig,
Herr Erzbischof. (16)

He is bitterly disappointed in his spiritual adviser. It seems that he, too, has lost his faith in God. His cynical exclamation,

entschliessen wir uns, an Gott zu
glauben, ist das Klügste, (17)

tends to prove this.

The archbishop stands in a representative way for modern man who has lost his faith in God. God, for modern man, is only a form:

für uns Heutige ist Gott reine
Form geworden. (18)

The leader of the coup d'état which forced the king in the dialogue Auffassungen to step down is the 'dictator', a former professor. A learned man, he chooses his words carefully. His ideas, however, are abstract and couched in slogans:

Die Gegenwart stellt hohe Anforder-
ungen an den Menschen. (19)

This is not an answer or a rejoinder but a definite statement which cannot be disputed.

Die Wahrheit bricht sich Bahn...

i.e., the truth will out, and

die ewigen Rechte des Volkes, (20)

which are written in the stars, represent some of the other fanatical beliefs in which he takes refuge and which he wants to defend at all cost.

There are only three things which the dictator considers

important:

die Lehren der Geschichte--das
Abgeordnetenhaus--die Pflicht.⁽²¹⁾

Everything can be reduced to these denominators: the teachings of history, Parliament and one's duty.

The president, too, holds certain fanatical beliefs:

wenn die Kugel des Schicksals rollt,
dann sind unsere Hände zu schwach,
sie aufzuhalten,⁽²²⁾

i.e., when once the ball of fate is set in motion, our hands will be too weak to arrest its course. A man has only one life, he tells the king, and his life will be dedicated to the welfare of the nation. He does things because he considers it to be his duty. He also reduces everything to the lowest common denominator: the welfare of the state and one's duty.

The dictator sees himself as the agent of historical necessity,

der Vollstrecker der historischen
Notwendigkeit.⁽²³⁾

As such he has only one purpose: the establishment of a republican form of government. This government, unfortunately, will not be a representative one; it will be controlled by the middle class, the bourgeoisie, for it is this group that is convinced,

dass sie die Vertreter der
Menschheit sind.⁽²⁴⁾

Ernst does not share this view. He regrets that

die Staatsgewalt dem Wohl nur eines
Teiles des Volkes dient.⁽²⁵⁾

The president, a former inn-keeper, states that he holds power because he is

ein in einem demokratischen Gemeinwesen
durch freie Übereinstimmung aller Bürger
gewählter Mann,⁽²⁶⁾

that he was chosen from a democratic community by the free accord of every citizen. He does not declare that he is the agent of historical necessity, instead he asserts:

Das Volk hat sich mündig erklärt,⁽²⁷⁾

i.e., the nation has declared itself of age and responsible for its own affairs. Just as one's twenty-first birthday is bound to come, so this change in government was inevitable, too.

There are two other participants in the dialogue Auffassungen: two men of the people, members of the proletariat. As such they seek the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, represented by the dictator.

Diesem Fettbürger sollte man einen
Dolch in den Wanst stossen,⁽²⁸⁾

exclaims one of them as the dictator leaves the prison. They, too, see themselves as agents of historical necessity:

Nun kommt an uns die Reihe, die
geschichtliche Notwendigkeit an
der Bourgeoisie zu vollstrecken.⁽²⁹⁾

Both believe that this process is an inevitable one. Hence they are not willing to be provoked into committing isolated deeds of violence. The dictator is therefore allowed to pass unmolested.

Like the dictator they are convinced that their cause is a just one, for the eternal rights of the people are written in the stars. So convinced are they of this, that they declare that God is on their

side and will help their cause triumph.

Ernst, though reluctantly, shares this belief. He had become intimately acquainted with the working class and its leaders during his years in Berlin. He believed them capable of becoming,

Schöpfer neuer höherer
Gesellschaftsbildungen, (30)

but at the same time he feared that the proletariat wanted to turn society upside down to gain for itself whatever material advantages were to be had:

Diese Klasse verachtete die feudale Gesellschaft, sie beneidete die Bourgeoisie, und das Ziel ihrer kompakten Majorität war, sich von der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft zu erwartenden materiellen Vorteile zu bemächtigen. (31)

He firmly believed that a republican form of government was desirable. He was afraid that both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would usurp power in order to gain control of the government. He therefore favoured a Socialist state in which all segments of society would have a voice:

Wenn es unserm Volk gelingt, durch die furchtbaren Gefahren des Augenblicks zu einer geordneten Verfassung zu kommen, dann werden wir zwar noch nicht die sozialistische Republik haben, aber eine Republik, welche im Begriff ist, sich in eine sozialistische Republik zu verwandeln. Dieses bedeutet, dass es nicht mehr die Herrschaft einer einzelnen Klasse oder gar eines Klüngels geben wird, sondern dass die gesamte Nation verwandelt wird in der Art, wie es für sie als Gesamtheit gut ist. (32)

As we follow the arguments put forward by the various participants we come to the conclusion that Ernst is here putting forward the principle that social change is inevitable. The participants must be taken as an extension of Paul Ernst and are made to put forward points of view which Ernst himself has already decided upon in advance.

The title of the dialogue, Auffassungen is a warning. It tells the reader that one point of view is placed in opposition to another. One can expect that these opposing points of view will be allowed to play themselves out. Because of this, the dialogue turns into an intellectual game in which one scores points. It thus becomes divorced from life.

There is also a conceptual element involved. This element militates against the concreteness of a dialogue. The participants have already made up their minds. This is implied in the title. Since they each hold a certain point of view it is unlikely that their stand will be modified through the influence of another.

The dictator, for example, does not open his mind to the king because his mind is made up. This is the way dictators are. He remains irretrievably rooted in his stance. He firmly believes in the eternal rights of the people and nothing will stop him from obtaining these rights for the people. Consequently the give and take which constitutes the life of a conversation is reduced.

The same situation exists in Der König. The king constantly interrupts and contradicts the president. Each one has his say without really listening to the other. They are speaking past each other.

Der König is consequently not really a dialogue; nor is it a conversation - it is a two-sided monologue.

Very often discussion helps to clarify our thoughts. In these dialogues, however, it is simply a matter of associating ideas with these people. These ideas are really super-imposed on them. Each one of them stands for something. His point of view is unalterable. Ernst uses these people to put across his ideas on Marx' and Engel's, Communist Manifesto.

These two dialogues lack the spontaneity which we normally associate with dialogue. Consequently one would not expect this kind of dialogue to happen in real life.

The situation in Auffassungen is not a concrete one. For it to be so, the king would have to listen to the dictator and have his mind changed. However, this does not happen. Each one puts forward his side but does not respond to his opponent. It is therefore not really a dialogue but a discussion.

In these dialogues the emphasis is on erdacht rather than Gespräch. The Gespräch here does not evolve of itself but takes a certain line which corresponds to the office of these people. This is one of the limitations of Ernst's dialogues.

DON JUANS DÄMONIE

In Spanish literature, Don Juan is a well known hero of a story found in folklore. It is represented in the literature of France and Germany, as well as Spain,

mit je fast hundert Fassungen.⁽¹⁾

Indeed it is one of the,

meistbearbeiteten Stoffe der
Weltliteratur.⁽²⁾

The Spanish tale recounts the hero's seduction of the daughter of the commander of Seville. In the most popular version, Don Juan, after killing the father of the girl in a duel, visits a statue of the commander and ironically invites it to a feast, whereupon the statue comes to life, seizes the hero, and drags him off to hell.

Compared to Ernst's other Gespräche, Don Juans Dämonie is unusual. It is unusual because it is preceded by one and one quarter pages of introductory remarks - in small print - a whole page more than for most of the other dialogues! It is also unusual in that it is a dialogue within a dialogue, ein Rahmengespräch. The framework consists of some remarks made to Don Juan by his manager before they retire to bed one evening and an argument between the two when Don Juan is awakened the next morning. In between there is the main dialogue, a conversation between Don Juan

and the Commendatore, the Commander of Seville, which is interrupted occasionally by Don Juan's servant, Leporello.

The main dialogue moreover is different from all the others because it takes place at several levels simultaneously. The main characters frequently change their identity without warning, playing two or three different roles in the same dialogue. The main dialogue thus is a fusion of the various conversations conducted at different levels into one confusing and disconcerting whole. What Ernst has created here is best understood if we take it as a dream situation.

The Don Juan of this Gespräch is actually three people: the hero of Mozart's opera, the actor who sings the part of Don Juan at the theatre in the Residenzstadt, and the person who converses with the statue in the dream situation.

The Commander of Seville, the Commendatore, also appears as three different persons: the steinerne Gast, i.e., the statue in the opera, the actor playing the Buffo role at the Residenzstadt theatre, and the apparition in the dream. These three figures often merge into one, sometimes starting a speech as one individual and finishing it as another.

Donna Anna, the daughter of the Commendatore in Mozart's opera, appears only once - in the dream. She is paired off with the daughter of the actor who sings the role of the Buffo. It is possible that the Buffo's daughter is cast in the role of Donna Anna but there is no conclusive evidence to substantiate this supposition.

The Impresario appears only in the framework of the Gespräch. Of all the characters in the dialogue he is the only one who does not

have a dual or triple identity. He is the manager of the actor who sings the part of Don Juan at the Residenzstadt theatre.

Leporello has two identities. He appears as Don Juan's valet, servant to the hero of the opera, and as the colleague of the Buffo actor and Ernst's Don Juan.

Don Juan, the actor, has retired for the night after his successful performance before the royal couple. As he lies in bed, dreaming, it seems to him as if he were not in his bed but on stage in the last scene of the opera. Beside him is Leporello, frightened. Don Juan takes his watch out of his pocket, looks at it, and remarks:

Gleich zwölf. Seit acht warte ich
schon. ⁽³⁾

At that moment the heavy steps of the statue are heard and the frightened Leporello hides under the table. Don Juan, reacting as any man would when shocked in a dream like this, wants to do the same but remembering his role, awaits his guest standing.

The steinerne Gast has come as Familienvater to have "ein vernünftiges Wort", ⁽⁴⁾ with Don Juan, the actor. He addresses Don Juan as Kollege and wants to know what he derives out of all the love affairs that he becomes involved in. He realizes that it is easy for his colleague to get involved in these affairs because of the role which he plays. He recalls that he was young, too, once but he wonders whether his colleague isn't getting a bit bored by the whole thing.

Ich bin eben Südländer, ⁽⁵⁾

Don Juan replies. It is Mozart's hero, the hot-blooded Spaniard,

speaking here.

The steinerne Gast indicates that he understands the meaning of Don Juan's remark. He considers him to be,

ein liebenswürdiger Mann,⁽⁶⁾

always well dressed and an outstanding baritone. However, he reminds his colleague that he, too, is getting older and that he should be thinking of getting married and settling down. The Buffo actor would then be able to live in peace because he would no longer have to worry about his daughter becoming involved with his colleague.

The Commendatore after having hinted to Don Juan that he might want to retire to his estates and look after them himself, suggests yet another course of action to Don Juan in the same speech. He tells him that he could easily make a career for himself in the civil service since civil service examinations have not yet been invented.

Sie können in ein Ministerium
eintreten und Karriere machen;
die Examina sind ja doch noch
nicht erfunden!⁽⁷⁾

It is possible that these examinations, or an early form, had been devised by 1787 when Mozart's Don Giovanni was performed for the first time. But it is doubtful that they were even thought of at the time when Don Juan made his first recorded appearance in literature in the play El Burlador de Sevilla written by Tirso de Molina (1571-1641). This second suggestion is, therefore, an anachronism.

The reference to the civil service and its entrance examinations is a criticism of the Beamtentum common to most poets. Ernst, however, had a personal grudge that dates back to 1917.

Ernst had wanted to serve his country on the homefront since his health did not permit him to serve in the regular forces. He offered his services to the government in the area in which he was best qualified. However, he was not wanted by the Presseamt and his offer to serve in an administrative position was also turned down. In the end he was put in charge of distributing clothing coupons in Clausthal as his part in the war effort.

Don Juan, the stage actor, tells his guest that the reason for his many love affairs must be his search for

die Idee des Weibes.⁽⁸⁾

This opinion is shared by at least one newspaper reporter in the Residenzstadt.

The Buffo retorts that this statement must have been made by "ein Gelehrter",⁽⁹⁾ since

diese Gelehrten ja nichts von
der Kunst (verstehen.)⁽¹⁰⁾

This is another one of Ernst's criticisms - a criticism of art critics who spoiled Ernst's appreciation and love of art for him in his youth by their opinionated reviews.

The steinerne Gast admits that he had not lived "wie ein junger Theologe"⁽¹¹⁾ in his youth, either, but that he did not have the nerve just to 'drop' a girl. He has thought about his role, even though it is only a small one, because he is a thinking artist. His wounded pride is the reason for this confrontation with Don Juan, the actor. He insists that his colleague's many love affairs are also due to Eitelkeit - in spite of what the critics are saying.

At this point Leporello, who is still hiding under the table,

speaks up and asks:

Weshalb sind denn die Mädchen so
dumm? Sie wissen doch Bescheid!
Aber sie wollen's eben. (12)

It is not made evident whether it is Ernst's or Mozart's Leporello who is making this assertion. He is cut short, however, by Mozart's Don Juan who tells him,

Du bist nicht gefragt! (13)

The familiar Du indicates that the master is speaking to the servant and not one actor to another.

Nevertheless, Leporello interrupts again. Even if the girl does not get married she at least has had something for her heart. The same point is made by Schnitzler in his play Liebelei, Leporello declares.

All three men now resume their identities as actors and a discussion of Arthur Schnitzler's play ensues. Leporello states that he does not like the ending of the play and reveals that he has written Schnitzler suggesting a more 'humane' one:

"Wenn man soviel Gemüt hat wie Sie",
habe ich ihm geschrieben, "dann macht
man eine grosse Szene, wo der junge
Mann erklärt: 'Morgen muss ich mich
verheiraten'. Das Mädchen wird
ohnmächtig, fasst sich aber schnell,
legt die Hand aufs Herz und sagt:
'Dein Glück geht vor, ich verzichte
und werde Telephonistin. Deine
Abstandssumme will ich nicht". (14)

Is it possible that Ernst is speaking through Leporello here? The more 'humane' ending suggested by Leporello for Schnitzler's play hints at this. It seems as if Ernst is criticizing his contemporary

for "murdering love in a human being"⁽¹⁵⁾ and for his pre-occupation with death - "death the sudden destroyer and executioner".⁽¹⁶⁾

Several possible reasons present themselves for the discussion of Schnitzler's play at this point in the dialogue. It could have been the next attraction at the theatre in the Residenzstadt, the actor playing the part of Leporello might have had a part in the play, or Ernst may simply have introduced the play to drive home a point. In any case the discussion of Schnitzler's Liebelei is cut short by the steinerne Gast who now demands of his colleague that he do the honourable thing and marry his daughter. That is what should have happened in the opera, the Buffo maintains, and Leporello agrees with him.

Now that he has communicated his feelings to Don Juan, the steinerne Gast is ready to leave. However, he still cannot understand how Mozart's Don Juan and also his colleague, who sings the role of Don Juan, could have acted the way he did, because he believes that,

der Mann ist doch kein Schurke.⁽¹⁷⁾

This is another example of the fusion of the two roles in the dream situation.

The explanation for Don Juan the actor's behaviour, he concludes, must be "der Fluch des Gastspiels",⁽¹⁸⁾ the curse of the guest engagement, which forces him to appear in one city one day and in another the next.

Donna Anna now makes her only appearance. She appears in the wings crying but does not utter a single word. At the sight of Donna Anna, Don Juan jumps up, exclaims "Donnerwetter"⁽¹⁹⁾ and

awakes from his dream, thus bringing to an end the main dialogue.

The Impresario's part in this dialogue is only a minor one - he speaks only eight times. However, it is not so much what he says but what he does that is important. As Don Juan's manager he exerts an extraordinary influence on his protégé. Not only does he manage Don Juan's business affairs but he also makes certain that his protégé projects the proper public image.

Don Juan, the hero of Mozart's opera, was a physically strong man. He was able to defeat the Commendatore, a military man, in a duel. Although probably twice as old as his opponent, the Commendatore must have been an excellent swordsman. If this had not been the case, Don Juan would simply have disarmed him and allowed him to live. Though this cannot be proven in any conclusive way, the interpretation offered nevertheless justifies itself.

Don Juan's Dämonie, which manifests itself in his pleasant personality, his power over women, and his extraordinary strength, is not unlike that possessed by Faust. Indeed striking similarities exist between the two roles.

Both Faust and Don Juan are intellectuals, but not the bespectacled, pedantic kind. Faust earns his living as a university teacher but his real vocation is scientific research. Don Juan is a member of the nobility. He is independently wealthy and therefore able to lead a life of pleasure.

A Faust or Don Juan who does not kill is unthinkable. Both men have blood on their hands. Faust killed Gretchen's brother and was instrumental in poisoning her mother, while Don Juan is the murderer of Donna Anna's father. We know that Faust received his extraordinary

powers from Mephisto. Could Don Juan have received his extraordinary qualities in the same way? The word Dämonie suggests this.

Both are unable to enter into a meaningful relationship with women. Don Juan is known for his many affairs - but that is all they are, affairs! He may be described as being narcissistic, i.e., capable of loving only himself. The hero of Max Frisch's, Don Juan has the same defect with the result that:

Don Juan bleibt ohne Du. (20)

He is unable to relate to others; he cannot break through to the Thou. The same holds true for their relationship to men. Both are spurned by other men. Their only companions are Mephisto and Leporello.

Both Faust and Don Juan are bored by life. Both crave excitement. Faust receives just that when he makes his pact with Mephisto. Don Juan's life is made exciting by the women who idolize him.

Faust and Don Juan are universal types; both are the subject of local myths in many countries. Although both legends developed separately, they began to coalesce in the nineteenth century. By that time the hero had been transformed into a rake. Grabbe's tragedy, Don Juan und Faust, 1829, is probably the best known example of this coalescence.

Ernst's Don Juan identifies himself with Mozart's Don Juan but this applies only to the dream situation. He feels that there is a gap between what he really is and what the critics expect him to be, but none of the women who admire him see the difference. He is in his present predicament because of his affair with the daughter of his

colleague, the Buffo actor. She, like all the other women, is in love with the hero of the opera and not really with the actor.

However, Don Juan's love is not genuine. Like Fritz Lobheimer, the hero of Arthur Schnitzler's drama Liebelei, he is only playing with love, flirting. For him love is a pleasant distraction. Like Fritz he is interested more in the women that he can not get - the princess in this instance - than in the woman who truly loves him. Don Juan's relationship with the Buffo's daughter is like Fritz's relationship with Christine: he loves her - 'too'.

In real life, however, Don Juan's main interest is making money. "Er verdiente glänzend",⁽²¹⁾ we are told in the introductory pages. His colleague, the Buffo actor, reveals the same thing:

Sie sollen doch auf die hohe Kante
gelegt haben, bei den Honoraren!⁽²²⁾

His salary was believed to have been very high. In fact, a figure in the tens of thousands is mentioned by the Impresario at the end of the dialogue.

Don Juan is awakened in the morning by his manager, who hands him a pack of opened letters. Not only has he opened his protégé's mail but he has also read it:

Das sind die andern Briefe. Alles
von Frauenzimmern.⁽²³⁾

Among the letters is an invitation to a tea party at the home of the Lord Chamberlain. The princess, who had sent him a wreath after his performance the previous evening, will be in attendance.

All the letters, including the invitation to the tea, are

meant for Don Juan, the actor. In the dream situation the Buffo had challenged Don Juan to do right by his daughter and marry her. We see from the Impresario's remark:

Was haben Sie denn mit der Tochter
von dem Bass Buffo hier vorgehabt?
Die schreibt Ihnen ja einen acht
Seiten langen Brief..(24)

that Don Juan is indeed romantically involved with her.

The Impresario, however, had already telephoned and informed the Lord Chamberlain's wife that Don Juan will not be able to attend the tea since he has to leave on the second train. He then orders Don Juan to get out of bed:

Nun erheben Sie sich nur; in zwei
Stunden müssen wir in der Bahn sitzen. (25)

Don Juan protests:

Aber die Fürstin - (26)

but is cut short by his manager, who replies:

Was koof' ich mir für die Fürstin? (27)

He then shows what he really thinks of his protégé by indicating with his finger that he believes him to be slightly demented.

The Impresario has no use for women, tea parties or social recognition:

Sagen Sie mal, was habe ich denn davon,
wenn Sie da Tee trinken? Denken Sie
etwa, mir liegt etwas an einem Orden von
hier? Ich habe so viel Orden, wenn ich
die alle anstecke, dann kann ich den
Rücken auch noch beplastern. (28)

What he is really interested in is his percentage of his protégé's salary. He proves this when he demands to know whether Don Juan is

prepared to pay a fine of 20,000 marks for missing his next engagement because of the tea party:

Wollen Sie vielleicht zwanzigtausend
Emm Konventionalstrafe blechen?⁽²⁹⁾

Even though Don Juan keeps on protesting it is obvious that 'he doth protest too much', in the Shakespearean sense. At the end of their brief argument he is told by his manager:

Vorwärts, aufgestanden, machen Sie
keine dummen Geschichten!⁽³⁰⁾

There is little doubt that Don Juan will be on the train in two hours' time and not in the Residenzstadt attending a tea party.

In the final analysis, Mozart's Don Juan and Ernst's Don Juan are two different persons. The two become alike only in the dream situation. The original Don Juan was a hero though a nefarious one, a dämonische Natur in the Goethean sense. Ernst's Don Juan shows his dämonische Züge only on stage. As a person he longs to identify with his role but is not allowed to live it by his manager.

After his successful performance Don Juan is sitting in his room smoking a cigarette, reflecting on the evening's happenings. Suddenly the Impresario enters without warning and we are told:

verlegen warf der Sänger die Zigarette
in den Spucknapf, welcher im Dunkeln
neben ihm stand.⁽³¹⁾

Not only does he smoke in the dark where no one can see what he is doing, but he is also verlegen, embarrassed, at being found out by his manager. He acts like a school boy who has been caught in the act by his teacher and not like a dämonische Person who would never be intimidated by anyone.

Don Juan considers himself lucky that his manager has not caught him smoking:

...der Impresario merkte zum Glück
nicht, dass er geraucht hatte. (32)

Had the Impresario caught Don Juan smoking he would no doubt have given him a lecture on the dangers of cigarette smoking - for his own and not only his protégé's future depended on the actor's good voice.

This unexpected reaction on the part of Don Juan points out the humiliating situation in which he finds himself as far as his relationship with his manager is concerned. It is the Impresario who controls Don Juan's life and not Don Juan!

Before his manager's inopportune arrival, Don Juan had been thinking about what all the critics were saying about him:

dass er in seinem Spiel etwas
Dämonisches hatte. (33)

Don Juan "dachte nach", (34) i.e., he was reflecting on what the critics had said. He wasn't really a dämonisches Wesen - he just thought he might be - and certainly wished that he could be such a person.

Don Juan, the actor, "verdiente glänzend". (35) Don Juan, the hero of the opera, was an aristocrat and hence independently wealthy. He had inherited his wealth and therefore had no need to work for a living.

It is true that Don Juan is interested in women but in one in particular - his mother:

... die grösste Genugtuung war ihm,
dass er so gut für sein liebes, altes
Mütterchen sorgen konnte. (36)

It was his greatest satisfaction that he could provide so well for his dear, old mother. The superlative grösste is significant here. As a dämonische Person he would never have felt it to be his 'greatest' satisfaction that he could provide so well for his aged mother. This can only be interpreted as a lower middle class attitude and not as etwas Dämonisches or an aristocratic desire.

He had also been thinking about the five laurel wreaths which had been presented to him at the end of the performance:

... vier kannte er; es waren die
Kränze des Impresario, die immer
mit auf die Reise genommen wurden. (37)

The wreaths, like flowers presented to prima ballerinas, indicate a successful performance. Four of the wreaths are always presented to him no matter what the quality of his performance. This, however, is a questionable insinuation and a showbusiness trick.

Don Juan is told by his manager how long he can sleep and when it is time to retire:

Halb zwölf. Wir müssen zu Bett
gehen. (38)

Half past eleven is bed time for Don Juan, the actor. No carousing all night or even staying up late for him!

One of the women who has written to him has sent along a ham:

eine hat einen Schinken mitgeschickt. (39)

Her action is a bourgeois gesture. It shows a complete misunderstanding of what a dämonische Natur really is. It is comparable to the concern that a mother might show for the well-being of a son who lives away from home. She wants to be a mother to Don Juan rather than a

mistress.

It is features like these that make this Gespräch deeply ironic. Ernst must have had a twinkle in his eye when he gave this dialogue the title Don Juans Dämonie.

All but one of these features are contained in the introductory remarks. The need for the lengthy introduction now becomes obvious - it is there to point out to the reader the ironic setting of the whole dialogue.

Unless the reader is aware that the various characters change their identity throughout the dialogue, he might easily assume that a reversal of roles, as far as language is concerned, is taking place in this dialogue. This technique is used by Ernst in several other Gespräche but here the apparent reversal is brought about by the frequent changes in the identity of the characters.

When Leporello speaks like an educated person and shows himself to be a literary critic, too, it is not the servant of the opera but the stage actor who is speaking. Something similar occurs when Don Juan, the steinerne Gast, and the Impresario, who are all educated people, use colloquial expressions and even slang - the kind of language one would expect a servant to use.

The same technique is used by Max Frisch. A striking example is found in his play Don Juan, oder Die Liebe zur Geometrie. There, on one occasion, Leporello speaks about his master in impeccable French:

Voilà par sa mort un chacun satisfait: Ciel offensé, lois violées, filles séduites, familles déshonorées, parents outragés, femmes mises à mal, maris poussés à bout, tout le monde est content. Il n'y a que moi seul de malheureux, qui, après tant d'années de service, n'ai point d'autre récompense que de voir à mes yeux l'impiété de mon maître punie par le plus épouvantable châtement du monde! (40)

Unfortunately Frisch provides no explanation for this sudden and unexpected switch in languages. One explanation for the use of perfect grammar does present itself, however. It is well known that the quality of the speech of French servants corresponds to the socioeconomic level of their employer, i.e., if their master is rich, influential and well-educated, the language used by his servants will be of a high calibre. Their speech is so refined and so polished that they even use the subjunctive correctly. Examples of this can be found in Molière's plays.

It is indeed curious that the principal characters in Ernst's dialogue use slang - and Berlin slang at that:

Sie brauchen keine Angst zu haben, dass
ich Ihnen später auf der Pelle liege... (41)

the Buffo assures Don Juan, if he will consent to marry his daughter.

Verplempern Sie sich nur, (42)

the Impressario warns Don Juan when he finds out that his protégé is having an affair with the daughter of the Buffo.

Einmal hatte er sie beinahe schon
unter die Haube gebracht... (43)

he continues, hinting at the Buffo's shrewdness.

When Don Juan insists on attending the tea given by the Lord Chamberlain's wife, the Impresario demands:

Wollen Sie vielleicht zwanzigtausend
Emm Konventionalstrafe blechen?(44)

The Impresario can't understand Don Juan's desire to attend this function and asks,

Was koof' ich mir für die Fürstin?(45)

The laurel wreath sent to Don Juan by the princess is the talk of the town:

das ganze Nest spricht davon.(46)

The princess is reported to have 'bawled':

Die Fürstin hat geheult,(47)

when she heard about all the unpleasantness that her action had brought about. On hearing this, Don Juan makes up his mind. He will stay and attend the tea.

Die zwanzigtausend Mark sind mir
piepe..(48)

he tells his manager.

From the foregoing examples it would appear that the principal characters are natives of Berlin. However, the most likely explanation for their use of Berliner Dialekt is that they are an extension of their creator who lived in Berlin for many years.

Although no date is given by Ernst for this dialogue, an approximate one can be assigned to it from the content. It is known that the Erdachte Gespräche were written between 1912 and 1920. It is also known that after World War I the German nobility no longer played an important role. Terms like Fürstin, Residenzstadt, and

Oberhofmeisterin date back to the days prior to, and during World War I when Germany was still ein Reich and not yet a republic. The approximate date for this dialogue is, therefore, sometime between 1912 and 1918.

Ernst's Gespräche were written for the reading public of his day, i.e., for the first generation of the twentieth century. He had to present the theme in terms which they understood, with references which were familiar to them. His reference to Schnitzler, one of his contemporaries, was therefore an appropriate one. It is because of this choice that this dialogue carries conviction and persuasion, qualities which we associate with actual conversations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing reading and interpretation of the six selected Gespräche and the quotations from several others show that Ernst's dialogues follow a predictable pattern. They reveal certain qualities which are so unique that we are justified in calling them Ernstian. These qualities range from unexpected stylistic devices to similarities with the drama and the Hörspiel.

At the beginning of each Gespräch there is a listing of the personae dramatis and a note on the setting. Sometimes an indication as to the date of the dialogue is given.

The dialogues are divided into scenes. Sometimes a change of scene brings with it, i.e., is indicated by, a change in the language of the characters.

There are several distinct scenes in Don Juans Dämonie: the theatre after the last curtain call, the streets of the Residenzstadt, a stage setting complete with stuffed peacock, and Don Juan's elegant hotel suite.

In Mäzen und Künstler, the Unterhaltung takes place first in Fiedler's study and then in the street outside Fiedler's house. However, while the mood of the conversation in the study ranges from joyous surprise to hopeful optimism on the part of Marées and from genuine concern to obvious disappointment on the part of Fiedler, it is the violent language used by the infuriated artist in the street that

really indicates the division of the dialogue into two distinct scenes.

In Ernst's Gespräche plot, character and theme are all related through words, actions and physical movements. Mounting tension and rising action are indicated by an increase in the number of exclamations, by emotional outbursts such as weeping and cursing, and by accompanying and corresponding stage directions.

As the conversation in Der Geburtstag des Dichters progresses, the tension mounts. This tension expresses itself in the strong opinions of the protagonist and antagonist and in the way in which they give vent to their emotions. Mathilde weeps in anger and exasperation. The poet curses because of the hate which he feels for the mindless and insensitive masses. This tension is moreover indicated by the stage directions:

unangenehm berührt; gereizt; noch mehr gereizt. (1)

In Religion und Moral the stage directions are emphasized even more:

Kant (fährt sich mit dem Finger zwischen Hals und Kragen, räuspert sich). (2)

The young mother,

schüttelt den Kopf, beugt sich über ihre Stickerei. (3)

The infant,

erwacht, strampelt mit den Beinen, bis es bloss ist, sieht sich dann nach der Mutter um, lacht, reibt sich die Augen und verzieht das Gesicht zum Weinen. (4)

Dialogue is used to convey the personalities of the characters both by what they say and in their interaction with the other characters. Background information is provided by the characters and not by the author. The characters reveal themselves through what they say and not through their actions, i.e., their physical movements.

The Commendatore takes Don Juan by the arm saying:

Nichts für ungut, Kollege.⁽⁵⁾

He recalls for the benefit of the reader how and why he was killed thus making a long and involved reference to Molina's play or Mozart's opera unnecessary. In Der Geburtstag des Dichters, the poet's wife clears up the mystery as to why the poet chose to marry her with one short statement:

Na, Alter, ich habe dich doch aus
mancher dummen Lage herausgerissen,
nicht wahr?⁽⁶⁾

The directions to her maid prove how much the poet's wife is pre-occupied with the Oberflächliche or Äusserliche:

Anna, nehmen Sie die Bezüge im Salon
ab. Binden Sie sich eine neue Schürze
vor. Wenn Herren kommen, dann führen
Sie sie in den Salon.⁽⁷⁾

The king in Auffassungen states that the reason for his overthrow is his own weakness and dependency on his advisors:

Glauben Sie, dass ich mit den Spiessern
nicht auch hätte fertig werden können, wenn
ich gewollt hätte? Aber ich habe nicht
gewollt, ich bin zu schlapp gewesen.
Weshalb habe ich denn meine Soldaten
zurückgezogen? Dafür wollen sie mich
jetzt hinrichten. Sehen Sie, das wurmt
mich. Ich habe auf die verdammten
Philosophen gehört mit den
Menschenrechten.⁽⁸⁾

The Ernstian dialogue, therefore, resembles the drama in that plot, character, and theme are all related through words, actions, and physical movement. One might even say that they are miniature plays.

Drama, however, is meant to be seen, not just heard. Ernst's dialogues are too short to be acted out on stage and therefore would have to be performed elsewhere.

The cast of characters in Ernst's Gespräche ranges from a minimum of two in Der Dichter und das Erlebnis to a maximum of five in Auffassungen. In the Hörspiel or radio play, the number of participants is also kept as small as possible. This allows the listener to associate the voice with the character it represents.

Ernst's use of stage directions gives him a chance to enter the picture and sketch in details. The same technique is used in the Hörspiel:

Zwischen der direkten Wiedergabe
seiner Gestalten kann der Dichter auch
selbst sich mit Mitteilungen
an den Leser [Hörer] wenden, und
er macht davon vielfältigen
Gebrauch. (9)

The word Leser, reader, instead of Hörer, listener, indicates that Hörspiele are also meant to be read. Indeed this is the sub-title of Heinz Schwitzke's collection of radio plays Hörspiele zum Lesen. Ernst's dialogues are not restricted to being acted out - they are primarily intended to be read. Similarly Hörspiele can be both broadcast on the radio or read by the individual reader.

Change of scene in the radio play is indicated by a fading in or out of voices. Ernst uses a similar technique on occasion. He changes the language used by his characters. A telling example is found in Mäzen und Künstler.

As in the drama, the characters in a radio play must provide the listener with the necessary background information:

...die erdichteten Figuren (müssen) [...] nicht bloss die Handlung, sondern gleichzeitig mit der Handlung durch ihre Worte und Dialogrepliken auch noch sich selbst, ihre Umwelt und ihre Gesprächspartner in der Phantasie des Zuhörers zum Leben erwecken. (10)

Ernst's characters do this in all his dialogues.

Different characters use different language. They can be identified by the language they use. Thus Kant uses philosophical terms, the dictator uses political slogans and the archbishop quotes Scripture. Don Juan uses slang and his servant speaks like an educated person.

Like Ernst, the writers of radio dramas like to use historical personages in their plays because they create their own frame of reference and the listener already has a mental image of the characters as they are introduced.

Ernst uses short, non-periodic sentences. They vary from statements, to questions, to exclamations. All of them are short, however, and easily grasped. This is imperative in the Hörspiel where the listener's attention must be retained by quick and lively exchanges of dialogue. Long, descriptive sentences in which the action that a character is engaged in is not revealed until the end of the sentence

would quickly 'kill' the listener's interest.

From the similarities between Ernst's Gespräche and the Hörspiel enumerated above, it is obvious that any one of Ernst's dialogues could be broadcast as an effective radio play.

Ernst's style, unlike that of Landor, is not musical, nor does his language have a lyrical ring to it. His language is simple, unadorned and almost homely. Indeed, it is the unaffected vocabulary, the colourful expressions, the unpretentious syntax that give force and vitality to his language.

Ernst's characters, for the most part, come across as real persons. Their purpose is not to elicit their opponent's statements and questions but to illuminate the theme or topic under discussion by weighing its pros and cons. They are never at a loss for words, nor are they ever seen groping for the right expression.

The frequent reversal of roles as far as language is concerned adds a new dimension to Ernst's dialogues. The use of colloquial language, even slang, by his characters, gives the Gespräche a distinctive flavour.

It is these qualities that give his dialogues their immediacy and directness and makes them so convincing.

Ernst makes it clear in the title of this work that the dialogues, though consciously thought out, may still be spontaneous. This is further underscored by the equal stress given the adjective erdacht and the noun Gespräch.

It is true that erdacht implies something conscious and

deliberate but when we consider its English equivalent, 'imaginary', we get back to the mind, to the imagination, to the source of inspiration. Ernst's dialogues, therefore, may be said to be a genuine artistic Geschenk.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I: PAUL ERNST - NOTES ON HIS LIFE AND WORK

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5. Paul Ernst, Tagebuch eines Dichters, p. 5.
6. Adolf Potthoff, Paul Ernst, p. 19.
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10. loc. cit.
11. Adolf Potthoff, Paul Ernst, p. 5.
12. Paul Ernst, Der Weg zur Form, p.29.
13. Adolf Potthoff, Paul Ernst, p.26.
14. loc. cit.
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CHAPTER II: THE DIALOGUE - A SURVEY IN BRIEF

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3. Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities, p. 503.
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8. loc. cit.
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10. Karl Vossler, Leopardi, p. 379.
11. op. cit., p. 380.
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18. Paul Valéry, Eupalinos, p. vi.
19. Justin O'Brian, Portrait of André Gide, p. 302.
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CHAPTER III: KINDS AND FORMS OF DIALOGUES - ATTEMPTS AT A DEFINITION

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3. Dictionnaire Alphabétique et Analogique de la Langue Française, Vol. I, p. 944.
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6. Oxford Dictionary, p. 387.
7. loc. cit.
8. quoted by Martin Heidegger in "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung", Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung, p. 31.
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15. op. cit., p. 910.
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52. Albrecht Goes, Von Mensch zu Mensch, p. 10.
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25. H. E. Holthusen, op. cit., p. 1399.
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